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# THE INDEPENDENT

Friday 1 May 1998 45p (R 50p) No 3,599

Newspaper of the Year for photographs

## Today's news

### Priest jailed for child abuse

A CATHOLIC priest who abused children at an orphanage over an eight-year period in the 1950s and 1960s was jailed for seven years yesterday.

Father Eric Taylor, who abused boys as young as six and then stood by as they were beaten by nuns for complaining, was found guilty of 16 charges of indecent assault and two charges of buggery. **Page 4**

### Heads attack 'beacon schools'

HEADS and teachers yesterday attacked a new Government scheme for "beacon schools" as divisive, elitist and unnecessary. Some heads also questioned whether those schools not named as beacons would be keen to take up the offer of help from their high-flying neighbours. **Page 6**

### Triple jab cleared

A MAJOR study of children who had the triple MMR vaccine against measles, mumps and rubella has found no evidence of a link with bowel disease and autism. Public confidence in the MMR vaccine was severely dented two months ago when researchers at the Royal Free Hospital, London, published a study of 12 children with bowel disease and autism which suggested there might be a connection with the vaccine. **Page 11**

### Brown's euro signal

GORDON Brown gave the clearest signal yet that he wants Britain to join the European single currency when he told MPs he would publish a plan this year for Britain to adjust to the start of the euro. Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, and trade minister Lord Simon will head a campaign to highlight the preparations the UK is making for the change-over to the euro from 1999. **Page 2**

### Foreigners' assets

The Government yesterday published 25,000 names of foreign nationals and businesses whose money was seized during the Second World War. The money was seized in an attempt to stop Hitler using the assets to fund his war effort. But many of those whose money was seized were themselves victims of the Nazis. Many were Jews who deposited the money in Britain before being sent to concentration camps. **Page 3**

### Independent award

The Independent has won the Best Use of Photography category at the 1998 Newspaper Awards. This follows the paper being awarded Newspaper of the Year and Black and White Newspaper of the Year for photography in the UK Picture Editors' Guild Awards. To mark these achievements, we have put together a selection of winning images from 1997. **Page 19**

## Business news

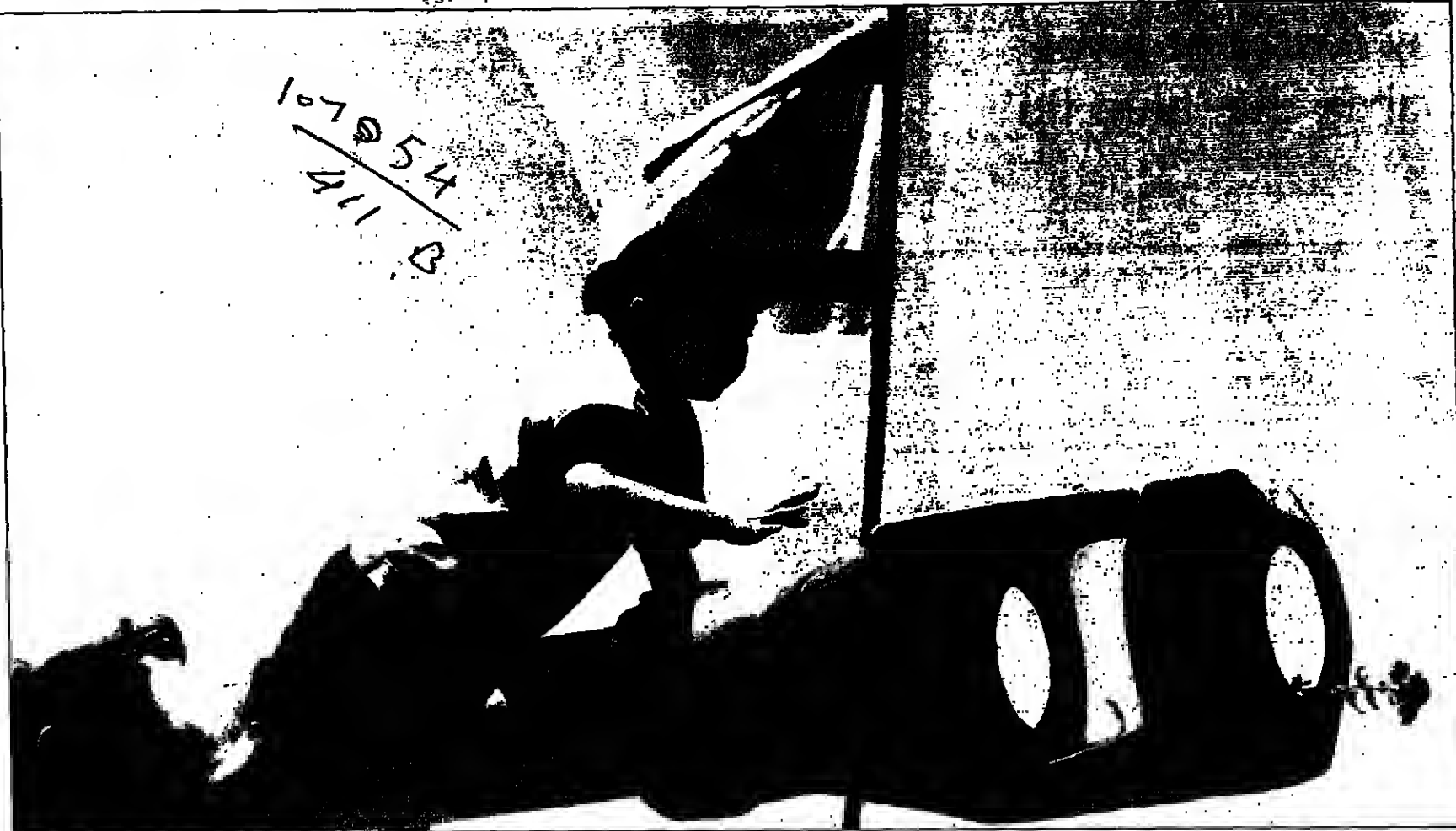
### EMI faces takeover

A BIDDING war for EMI was in prospect yesterday after the British music group said that it had received an offer that could lead to a takeover. The offer is thought to have come from Seagram, the Canadian drinks and entertainment group, valuing EMI at £5bn. **Page 24**

## Sports news

### Shearer's denial

ALAN SHEARER, the England captain, has denied kicking a player in the face during Newcastle United's game against Leicester City. Television footage appears to show the Newcastle striker hit Neil Lennon in the face with his boot during Wednesday's Premiership match at Filbert Street. **Page 32**



### Israel celebrates 50 years of survival

A CHILD climbs along a cannon barrel during an Israeli army weapons exhibition at the Gush Etzion settlement yesterday.

Israelis celebrated the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the state with dancing in the streets, fireworks and military demonstrations that included a fly-past by the air force, a naval display and the dropping of paratroopers on Tel Aviv beach.

Ultra-orthodox Israelis objected to a display by modern dancers at the "Jubilee Bells" festival last night. The dancers were reported to be intending to strip down to their underwear. Palestinians, meanwhile, mourned the loss of their land 50 years ago.

Israel celebrates, page 13  
Photograph: AFP

## Whitehall blamed over Bell book

By Ian Burrell  
Home Affairs Correspondent

THE controversy surrounding the publication of a book about the child killer Mary Bell developed further yesterday when Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, revealed that his officials had known about the book project for more than two years.

Mr Straw immediately ordered an inquiry into why the information was not made available to ministers. The Home Secretary is indignant that Bell has been able to make around £50,000 from the book and is urgently looking at the law to stop other criminals profit-

ing from their crimes in such a way. Whitehall sources said yesterday that if ministers had been told of the book in March 1996, when officials first learned about it, they could have tried to stop the payment.

Ann Widdecombe, who was a Home Office minister with responsibility for prisons when the book deal first became known, said yesterday she was "quite disgusted" that ministers had not been informed. She said: "One cannot have material of that order of magnitude known to officials and probation officers and not known by ministers."

Officials became aware of the

book when Durham Probation Service passed information to the Prison Service Life Review Unit, which monitors released life sentence prisoners, who remain on licence for the rest of their lives.

The unit decided that the book project was not a breach of Bell's licence and took no action.

In a statement, Mr Straw said: "I deeply regret that ministers were not informed and were therefore not able to intervene. I have asked the Permanent Secretary to investigate what happened so we can learn lessons for the future."

Had ministers allowed the book project to have become public

knowledge in 1996, publishers Macmillan and author Gitta Sereny would have been under great pressure to withhold the payment to Bell. Probation officers may also have been asked to advise Bell against going ahead with the book.

A Whitehall source said that if current ministers had known about the project in 1996 they would certainly have intervened. "If anything could have been done to stop payment that would have been attempted," he said.

Mr Straw issued his statement after a meeting at the Home Office with June Richardson, whose four-year-old son Martin was Bell's

first victim. She demanded Bell hand back the cash she was paid for her help with the book.

Bell and her 14-year-old daughter have been forced to flee their home on the south coast after being besieged by reporters. Tabloid newspapers yesterday carried interviews with Bell's boyfriend, who disclosed that the Home Office had known for some time that a book was planned. After the Home Office was asked to confirm this, an inquiry was launched.

The Press Complaints Commission said yesterday that it had launched an inquiry into a possible breach of its code of practice over

payments made to Macmillan by the Times, which is serialising the book, *Cries Unheard*.

Clause 16 of the newspaper code of practice bans payments to agents or associates of convicted criminals unless there is an overwhelming public interest.

"We received a written complaint from a member of the public and have written to the editor of the Times to ask for his comments," he said.

A decision is expected later today from the Attorney General John Morris on whether there is any means under existing law to block the payments to Bell.

### Move to put violent suspects in 'leg irons'

By Jason Bennett  
Crime Correspondent

HIGH-TECH "leg-irons" could soon be fitted on violent suspects arrested by the police, under plans being considered by chief constables.

Last week, police in Scotland called for the introduction of leg-restraints following concerns about the large number of injuries being caused during struggles in the back of police cars and vans.

Next month, a police training expert will visit the American state of Louisiana to examine the use of leg-shackles as part of a research project for the Association of Chief Police Officers. Inspector Peter Boatman, of Northumbria police, said about 10 per cent of all cases in which force is used takes place in police vehicles.

"It can involve kicking officers, head-butting, biting, kicking windows out, and bashing windows with their heads," he said.

He said he was particularly interested in examining an American restraint device that is made of tough flexible material which is fitted above and below the knees, locking the legs together.

Prisoners are usually fitted with the restraint outside the police vehicle and are then lifted into it by the arresting officers.

Insp Boatman stressed that he was also looking at ways of improving vehicle design to reduce the num-



American-style leg-irons which could be introduced to Britain

ber of injuries and improved restraint techniques.

Delegates at last week's Scottish Police Federation conference, which represents the rank-and-file officers, voted unanimously for a motion calling for the introduction of leg-restraints to control prisoners displaying symptoms of excited delirium or drug-induced psychosis.

Sgt James Blundell, of Grampian police, said that "upper body restraint alone is inadequate - cuffs aren't enough... We require further assistance in the form of lower body restraints. We want to avoid risks for prisoners and our members." And Insp Allan Todd, from Tayside, said a recent survey found that about half of his force's officers who suffered injuries on duty had been kicked while trying to restrain a suspect.

John Wadham, director of Liberty, the civil and legal rights organisation, cautioned yesterday: "The police are entitled to use reasonable force to detain people, but we would be opposed to the routine use of any kind of restraint."

### Huge car bomb is defused in Northern Ireland

By David McKelrick  
Ireland Correspondent

THE THREAT of violence dominated the Northern Ireland peace process yesterday as a large republican car bomb was defused in a Co Antrim town amid condemnation of the IRA's refusal to decommission its weapons.

The car bomb was left in Market Square in the mainly Protestant town of Lisburn. The 600-700lb device, which was primed and ready to explode, would have devastated the centre of the town.

It was made safe by army bomb disposal experts who carried out three controlled explosions on the vehicle. The initial assumption, while the results of forensic tests are awaited, is that the attempted attack was the work of one of the republican splinter groups, such as the Continuity IRA, who oppose the peace process.

The reminder of the threat posed by renegades came as the IRA flatly declared, in a statement issued early yesterday, that "there will be no decommissioning". The statement went on to clear the way for a move to change the constitution of Sinn Féin to allow members to take their seats in the planned new assembly.

The IRA stance on weapons was criticised from various quarters, though the Government noticeably refrained from asserting in absolute terms that the absence of IRA decommissioning would automatically

exclude Sinn Féin from a new administration.

Ulster Unionist Party leader David Trimble said the statement was, in effect, a rejection of the agreement by "Sinn Féin/IRA". He added: "Things like prisoner release and the opportunity of being involved in the administration of Northern Ireland are not to be made available to them unless they accept it really must now be peace."

A contrasting view was given by David Ervine, of the Progressive Unionist Party, which is associated with a loyalist paramilitary grouping. He said some elements of the IRA statement were worrying, with the retention of weapons carrying an implicit threat. But he added: "The IRA are creating stepping-stones away from their republican ideology. That is extremely significant."

Tony Blair, speaking during a visit to Manchester, said: "It has got to be absolutely clear that people who serve in the government of Northern Ireland have to give up violence, whichever party it is."

"It is not surprising that the IRA are saying this at this stage. But this is a package and a whole package and in the referendum people will be voting on the whole package."

Former US Senator George Mitchell, who chaired the talks which led to the agreement, said that paramilitary disarmament in Northern Ireland should begin as soon as possible.

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(Continued page 1)

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# Cash to be restored to Jewish victims

By Andrew Buncombe

FOR more than a year Miklos Breuer and his family lived a secret life, hiding from the Nazis in a fifth-floor flat in a tenement block in Budapest.

"It was pretty awful. We could barely leave the flat or else we would have been shot because we were Jews," he recalled yesterday. "During many of the bombing raids we had to stay there rather than go to the shelters. And there was also very little food."

In 1939, with the outbreak of fighting just months away, Mr Breuer's parents had hidden away their assets - £269 - in a London bank. Twenty-one years later, when Mr Breuer, then aged 33, came to London to recover it, he was told by the National Westminster Bank's branch in Moorgate that the money had been seized under Trading with the Enemy legislation. Since then he has not seen a penny.

Yesterday the names of Mr Breuer's parents, Imre and Mariska, were among those of 25,000 foreign nationals and businesses, published by the Government, whose money was seized during the Second World War.

Margaret Beckett, President of the Board of Trade, said the names were being published to help people who believe they are owed money, to make their claims. A claims procedure is being established and a fund of

£2m has already been set aside with more promised if necessary.

Mrs Beckett told the Commons that claims would be considered "on the principle that confiscated assets placed in the UK by victims of Nazi persecution should be returned where practicable and where claims can be validated".

The names, which were published on the Internet, are of people from Germany, Bulgaria, Japan, Hungary and Romania. Many of the names are of people who will now be dead and claims will have to be made by surviving relatives.

The Government's announcement follows pressure from the Holocaust Education Trust, which last September revealed the extent of people whose money was seized, using the documents held within the Public Records Office. Later this year, details of about 5,000 asset-holders from the former Yugoslavia, the former Czechoslovakia and Poland will be added to the Government Website.

A total of £367m at pre-war prices was seized by the Government. All but £33m - worth about £500m today prices - was returned after the war.

The HET has set up a helpline for anyone wanting to check if their name or that of a relative is on the list. The number is 0171 222 5115. The website address for the list is [www.enemyproperty.gov.uk](http://www.enemyproperty.gov.uk)

# Newspapers tarnished by Mary Bell coverage

By Paul McCann  
Media Editor

THE FOCUS of attention in the Mary Bell case switched onto the behaviour of the national press yesterday, with precious few newspapers, from the quality to the tabloids, covering themselves in glory.

The tabloids were simultaneously condemning and wooing Mary Bell, not to mention feeding drinks to her boyfriend for a story, while the *Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* exchanged letters and leader articles on the rights and wrongs of paying for the book's serialisation rights.

The Press Complaints Commission disclosed that it was conducting an investigation into the *Times* £40,000 purchase of Gitta Sereny's book on Ms Bell, *Cries Unheard*, following a complaint from a member of the public. The investigation may take a month to complete.

Peter Stothard, editor of the *Times*, denied yesterday that money from his newspaper reached Bell. He also maintained that the book was in the public interest.

The PCC disclosed that it had received 30 to 40 complaints from the public about the behaviour of reporters outside Ms Bell's home in a south coast town. Most callers were angry that the journalists' presence had forced Ms Bell to admit her true identity to her 14-year old daughter. They were also angry that the reporter's door-stepping tactics meant the East Sussex Police had to take the pair into protective custody.

The commission is unable to take up complaints about press harassment from third parties because those complaining cannot name the actual newspapers and journalists involved. So far the PCC has had no complaint from Ms Bell.

Mr Stothard denied that the *Times* carried any responsibility for the bounding of Ms Bell. Instead he attacked Jack



Straw, the Home Secretary, for his remark this week that Ms Bell had endangered her right to privacy by co-operating on the book. "It was like Jack Straw saying the court order protecting her identity doesn't matter. Politicians have legitimised the chase, this hysterical side issue of tracking her down and punishing her."

While tabloid newspapers expressed outrage at a payment made by Ms Sereny to Ms Bell for her co-operation on the book, it emerged that at least two Sunday newspapers were vying for interviews with her.

Both the *News of the World* and the *Mail on Sunday* posted letters into the Bell home on Wednesday. The *News of the World*'s editor Phil Hall said yesterday: "We haven't offered her any money. We have offered her a safe berth away from media attention in return for an interview."

But Ms Sereny claimed that some newspapers were offering money which made the payment she had made look "infinitesimal in comparison with the offers she [Bell] has had from the very same newspapers who have been screaming the loudest

these last 10 days. The offers are continuing to come in."

Clause 16 of the PCC's code would forbid any payment to Ms Bell because she is a convicted criminal. Newspapers could get around the rule if they could prove there was a public interest in making the payment. Less legitimately, some tabloid newspapers have in the past made payments to close family friends in order to secure interviews without breaking the PCC code.

All of the tabloid newspapers carried front page interviews with Ms Bell's 39-year old

boyfriend yesterday, but no money changed hands. However one reporter did confess that the man was clearly in a distressed state.

Meanwhile, at the other end of the newspaper market, both the *Times* and the *Daily Telegraph* were trying to make capital out of the story.

Charles Moore, editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, penned an article for his newspaper on Tuesday explaining why he had turned down serialisation rights for the Bell book and implicitly attacking the *Times* for doing so. The following day Mr

Stothard returned fire in an article accusing Mr Moore of dropping a £75,000 offer for a book he admired because of fears about what rivals' opinions of the deal, it was said: "Rejection of principle in return for safety from criticism."

This prompted the unusual response of letter in yesterday's *Times* from the editor of the *Daily Telegraph* accusing Stothard of misleading his readers.

And somewhere Mary Bell, in hiding with her 14-year-old daughter, must be considering the value of whatever payment Ms Sereny made to her.

# The man who broke the ice and entered the history books

At the end of a 600-mile, 57-day journey across creaking ice, David Hempleman-Adams stepped into the history books as the first person to complete the adventurers' grand slam, writes Clare Garner.

The 41-year-old British businessman's conquest of the geographic North Pole made him the only person to have reached all four poles, magnetic and geographic, north and south, and climb the highest peaks in each of the seven continents. His arrival at the top of the world on Tuesday completed an 18-year odyssey that has dominated his life.

He can now look himself in the mirror and answer with a resounding affirmative the question which has goaded him on to greater heights. For it was the words with which Baroness Thatcher's father frequently berated his daughter - "It is easy to be a starter but are you a finisher?" - which at times kept him going.

Among the first to congratulate him were to be his wife, Claire, and daughter, Alicia, who yesterday flew out to Resolute Bay, in Canada, to meet him. "I can't wait to see my dad, although I know he will stink. Normally he has a bath before I see him," said Alicia, eight, who was to become the youngest Briton to stand on the North Pole. Mrs Hempleman-Adams, who has not seen her husband since February, said: "I'm extremely pleased for him. All the other expeditions have been relatively successful, but this one has been his Achilles heel. He had several attempts, at last he has done it."

It is 15 years since Mr Hempleman-Adams first set out to beat the North Pole. In March 1983, inspired by a report in *National Geographic* on the Japanese adventurer Naoto Uemura, who made the journey to the geographic North Pole, he endeavoured to walk alone and unsupported to the pole. He abandoned the attempt after cracking two ribs. In March 1997, he made a second attempt which was thwarted when his Norwegian companion Rune Gjeldnes's sledge fell to pieces.

On 5 March this year, the pair set out once more. It turned out to be a case of third time lucky. They braved biting winds, blizzards, thin ice, stretches of open

## IN THE NEWS DAVID HEMPLEMAN-ADAMS



Adventurer David Hempleman-Adams has completed his epic journey

water and temperatures down to -80C (-112F). For comfort they listened to Lou Reed's "Perfect Day" and Yao Morrison on their personal stereos, and ate chunks of chocolate hourly, carefully sucked to ensure they did not lose their fillings.

Mrs Hempleman-Adams, 35, a solicitor, has never been under any illusions about her husband. While he has been away conquering mountains and ice caps, she has stayed at home in Swindon, Wiltshire, to bring up their three daughters,

Alicia, Camilla, three and Amelia, two. She knew from the moment she met him - at 18, in a student bar at Bristol - that he would over give up his thirst for adventure. "I never thought he would grow out of it because he is the type of person who has to have something to aim for," she said. "He has set up and sold a successful business, built a house and explored the world. He was one of those people who cannot let life go by. He has to do things. He is a doer as well as a talker."

this year, Mr Hempleman-Adams and Mr Gjeldnes are the only two to have reached the top of the world.

**LONG ROUTE TO THE TOP**  
It took Mr Hempleman-Adams 18 years to complete the adventurers' grand slam. He began his quest as a holiday mountaineer at the age of 23, fired by the enthusiasm of completing a Duke of Edinburgh Gold award. He started by climbing Mt McKinley in Alaska in 1980 during a break from his post-graduate studies.

**GRAND SLAM**  
The adventure's grand slam consists of: the magnetic North Pole in the Arctic Archipelago; the magnetic South Pole off the coast of Antarctica; the geographic North and South Poles at the top and the bottom of the world; Mt Kilimanjaro (5,895m) in Africa; Mt Everest (8,848m) in Asia; Elbrus (5,642m) in Europe; Vinson Massif (5,140m) in Antarctica; Mt Aconcagua (6,960m) in South America; and

Carstensz Pyramid (5,030m) in Australasia.

**FIRST TO NORTH POLE**  
Admiral Robert Peary, from Maine, in the United States, claims to have been the first man to reach the North Pole on 6 April 1909. A prior claim had been made by his former colleague, Dr Frederick Cook, who had many supporters. However, scientific investigations verified Peary's accounts, and in 1911 the US Congress recognised his claim. Of the 3 explorers who set out for the geographic North Pole

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# Priest jailed for seven years for abuse at orphanage

By Linus Gregoriadis

A CATHOLIC priest who abused children at an orphanage was jailed for seven years yesterday.

Father Eric Taylor, who abused boys as young as six and then stood by as they were beaten by nuns for complaining, was found guilty of 16 charges of indecent assault and two charges of buggery.

During sentencing at Warwick Crown Court, Judge Marten Coates told 78-year-old Taylor: "For nearly seven years you were in a position of trust and authority at the home at Coleshill.

"These homes had been set up to rescue the most vulnerable people in our society.

"You told the jury the regime was harsh and boys

were beaten in an unlawful manner. Not only did you do nothing about this, but you knew the fear of receiving such punishment meant that the boys were unlikely to complain.

"Those few who did know their complaints would not be believed and secure in that knowledge you indulged yourself.

"The lifelong damage you inflicted has been seen during the course of this trial. The trust placed in you, you abused on a daily basis."

During the two-week trial the jury heard of a catalogue of offences at the Father Hudson's home in Coleshill, Warwickshire, between 1957 and 1965.

After the verdict, one jury member left the court in tears as it was revealed that Taylor had been previously been fined by magistrates for abusing four

boys at his vicarage in Worcestershire in 1975.

Taylor, of Aston-by-Stone, Staffordshire, was jailed for seven years on the two counts of huggery and five years, to run concurrently, on the charges of indecent assault.

Now in their forties and fifties, the 16 victims who helped secure a conviction are only the tip of the iceberg, it is believed.

At least two orphans who were at the home during Taylor's reign committed suicide, according to Warwickshire police who have also revealed that 10 more former residents had come forward since the beginning of the trial.

Victims told how Taylor was "like a Pied Piper" who was revered at the orphanage, by nuns who admired his status as a former prisoner of war, and

by young boys whom he would reward with cigarettes, money and sweets.

Taylor, who spent four years in a war camp in Austria after being captured while serving with the Royal Navy during the Second World War, arrived at the home in 1957 after being ordained three years earlier.

He would prey on young boys as they slept in their dormitories, the court heard.

Nuns at the orphanage would beat those who complained with belts, canes, wet rags and straps, it emerged, and people who complained about Taylor's activities would be forced to do chores.

Taylor, who denied all the charges, was found not guilty of two further charges of buggery and one charge of indecent assault.

The Roman Catholic

Church last night apologised to the priests' victims. A joint statement issued by the Father Hudson Society and the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham, read: "We deeply regret the effect of Father Taylor's actions and will offer counselling and ongoing support as appropriate to those concerned."

The Father Hudson Society has not operated residential homes since 1984 but runs a range of services including adoption, fostering, residential and day care for older people and those with disabilities.

Judge Coates told Taylor: "The boys came from all walks of life. You are a disgrace to your cloth and the church you proclaim. Your victims were not only young but they were helpless, you were the nearest thing they had to a father figure."



Eric Taylor arriving at Warwick Crown Court yesterday. The judge told him: "You are a disgrace to your cloth and the church you proclaim" Photograph: David Jones

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## Football fans held in raids

FOUR people were charged last night with public order offences after officers mounted dawn raids on suspected football bootleggers. Another eight people are also expected to be charged. Kent Police said the raids on addresses in Kent, south-east London and Surrey followed violence at the Second Division match between Gillingham and Fulham last month which left one fan dead, Eurostar train tickets to France during the World Cup were also seized in the operation.

The men were arrested as part of a continuing inquiry into the killing of Fulham fan Matthew Fox, 24, from Furrey, south London, near Gillingham's stadium on 28 March. They are due to appear before Medway magistrates in Kent on 26 May. One man has already appeared in court charged with murdering Mr Fox outside the ground during clashes between groups of rival fans.

## Mardi Gra charges

TWO brothers accused in connection with the string of Mardi Gra bombings appeared in court yesterday. Ronald Russell Pearce and Edgar Eugene Pearce are each charged with conspiring to possess home-made firearms with intent to endanger life, conspiring to blackmail Barclays Bank and also conspiring to blackmail Sainsbury.

Ronald Pearce, 66, retired, from Chiswick, west London, was remanded in custody until 7 May when he appeared before Horseferry Road magistrates' court in central London. His 60-year-old unemployed brother, also from Chiswick, was remanded in police custody for further questioning for 48 hours. He is to reappear at Bow Street magistrates' court tomorrow. Yesterday's court appearance follows a police investigation into 36 attacks since December 1994, mainly against branches of Barclays and Sainsbury in South-east England.

## Tube strike goes ahead

GUARDS on London Underground's Northern Line are due to strike today and on Tuesday after last-minute talks aimed at resolving a jobs dispute ended in failure. Members of the Rail Maritime and Transport union have already staged two walkouts in recent weeks in a row over the treatment of displaced guards. The union said guards who have to change jobs because of the introduction of driver-only operated Tube trains could have to travel up to four hours to a new job.



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# Superschools are elitist and divisive, warn teachers

By Judith Judd  
Education Editor

HEADS and teachers yesterday attacked a new government scheme for beacon schools as divisive, elitist and unnecessary.

Some heads questioned whether schools not named as beacons would be keen to take up the offer of help from their high-flying neighbours.

Stephen Byers, the schools standards minister, announced £1.8m for 100 beacon schools which will spread good practice by training teachers and helping nearby schools improve their performance. They will be chosen from schools which have received exceptional praise from Ofsted inspectors.

Nigel de Gruchy, general secretary of the National Association of Schoolmasters Union of Women Teachers, said there was a danger that they would produce more social se-

lection because most parents would want to send their children there and heads would resort to selecting pupils by parental interview. "There is a danger that beacon schools will become the new social grammar schools, and the rest the new social secondary moderns."

Mr Byers said the aim was not to create an elite but to spread excellence. "These schools have already been identified as performing very well. Parents know that. What we want to do is to help all schools perform at this high level."

He explained the plans at a conference in London for 176 schools named for their outstanding performance in the annual report by Chris Woodhead, chief inspector of schools. All will be asked to volunteer to become beacon schools.

They will be given up to £50,000 to release good teachers to help visiting or new

teachers on issues such as literacy, truancy and improving GCSE results.

But some heads questioned whether there would be much enthusiasm for beacon schools' services.

Martin Roberts, head of the Cherwell School, one of Oxfordshire's most successful comprehensives, which is to be inspected next spring and which is not among the 176, argued that the judgement of Ofsted and Chris Woodhead should not be taken too seriously.

"A beacon school is going to be only marginally better than other schools. I would be very surprised if most schools and governors felt that anything very significant could be learned by whizzing off to see what they are doing in another school. For most schools I doubt whether a beacon school is going to amount to more than a few jokes in the pub."

Alan Symmonds, head of Newbiggin Middle School in Newbiggin, Northumberland, an area with high unemployment in a county with many small country schools, said he was always willing to learn from good practice but questioned whether it would translate from one area to another. "Would I say to my teachers in a difficult area that they might learn something if they go to a school where the children all arrive in Rolls-Royces? There is a credibility problem."

The first beacon schools will start this autumn and their status will last for three years. They will agree contracts with the Government which will specify their particular strengths.

Mr Byers said: "We believe that a network of beacon schools shining forth across the country will show the way forward and raise standards for everyone."



Class divide: Teachers worry that 'beacon' schools will become social grammars with the rest neglected. Photograph: John Voos

## Pupils face new mental maths tests

By Ben Russell  
Education Correspondent

MORE THAN a million children across Britain will face tough national tests of their mental arithmetic for the first time next week. New grammar tests for 14-year-olds are also being piloted in a move which will please traditionalists.

The 20 minute maths tests, to be sat by all 11- and 14-year-olds on Tuesday, will be the first national assessment of children's ability to deal with numbers without the aid of pencil and paper. The tests, which were piloted last year, give children five, 10, or 15 seconds to answer each question on a tape sent to all schools.

New English tests for 14-year-olds, being sent to a sample of schools, will separate reading and writing to place more emphasis on traditional grammar.

Dr Nick Tate, chief executive of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, which administers the tests, also announced a crackdown on exam fraud after a handful of schools were found to have broken the rules on testing last year.

This year schools will be subject to spot checks to ensure the exams are being properly administered. Officials will check around 2,000 schools, but officials insisted that only a handful of complaints had been received.

Dr Tate said: "There was very little evidence of abuse last year. But in so far as there were some cases, this undermines the credibility of tests and it was important to take this decisive action."

Most allegations came from other schools which suspected their neighbours of malpractice. But out of 20,000 schools only 30 reached the stage of a formal complaint to the QCA. Of those, 10 cases of malpractice were substantiated.

About 1.8 million pupils will be taking national tests for seven, 11 and 14-year-olds over the next two weeks. Seven-year-olds will sit tests in maths and English, while 11- and 14-year-olds will be tested in maths, English and science. Teachers will also have to assess pupils in other subjects, like foreign languages, history and geography.

The new grammar tests were launched after an analysis of last year's English results found fundamental problems with spelling, grammar and punctuation. The new writing tests give children a series of tasks, such as writing a letter or writing a third person report of spoken English, designed to test whether youngsters can use reported speech, deal with tenses, punctuate correctly or use the third person.

Reading tests will test comprehension, as well as requiring children to comment on sentence structure.

Voluntary tests for eight, nine and 10 year olds have also been sent to schools. Officials said around 90 per cent of schools were expected to take them up.

Results from a sample of 10,000 test results will be used to create a survey of national standards. Officials said there were no plans to make the voluntary tests compulsory.

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- Subtract 100 from 6,003 (10 seconds)
- What is one quarter of 322 (10 seconds)
- What is the cost of five cassette tapes at £1.99 each? (15 seconds)
- A bag of oranges costs £1.49. How many bags could you buy with £10? (15 seconds)
- Multiply 3.06 by 1,000 (10 seconds)
- Multiply 0.2 by 30 (10 seconds)
- A square has a perimeter of 20 metres. What is the area of the square? (15 seconds)
- The price of a boat ticket goes up from £5 to £5.25. What is the percentage increase? (15 seconds)
- Thirteen out of 20 people had brown eyes. What percentage of people had brown eyes? (10 seconds)

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## Auditors get new powers to study royals' spending

By Fran Abrams  
Political Correspondent

GOVERNMENT watchdogs are to be given increased access to the royal accounts, it was announced last night.

In future the National Audit Office will be able to examine accounts on how public grants for Royal Palaces and transport are spent. The palaces will receive an annual grant of £15.8m this year, while Royal Transport cost the public purse £2m in 1996-97.

The Department of Media, Culture and Sport has reluctantly agreed to more open access under pressure from the House of Commons Public Accounts Committee.

The committee had complained that it had no open access to the books and that this prevented full scrutiny of how

the public money was spent. One member, the Labour MP Alan Williams, had been refused information on subsidised accommodation for royal employees and pensioners.

Although Sir John Bourn, who heads the NAO, will still have to ask the department for the information he wants, it is expected that in future he will always receive it. Yesterday Sir John described the announcement as "important and welcome." He said: "I look forward to a close working relationship with the relevant department and the officials of the Royal Household."

Mr Williams also declared himself happy with the agreement, though he added that there was still no access to details of the Civil List.

"This is a much more positive position. In the past there has been a rather deferential

view of the Palace instead of a recognition that this is taxpayers' money," he said.

David Davis, the committee chairman and Conservative MP for Haltemprice and Howden, said there should be transparency and accountability wherever taxpayers' money was spent.

"With the new arrangements the public will be able to have confidence that their money is being spent efficiently and wisely," he said.

The committee has also asked for open access to the accounts of Camelot, the firm which runs the National Lottery, of housing associations and on legal aid.

It's a funny old world: Friends gather to pay tribute to the creator of 'Dear Bill'



John Bird and Jonathan Miller at the memorial service for the satirist John Wells at St Paul's Church, Covent Garden

Photograph: Neville Elder

## Forest sales under fire

By Anthony Bevins  
Political Editor

THE Forestry Commission is criticised today for the way it sold off 66,000 hectares of property—a year after the new Government bolted the gate on further large-scale sales.

A report from the National Audit Office said that the commission had "not completely" established sound strategies for selecting forests for disposal, or assessed the costs and benefits of disposal decisions.

It also criticised the commission's decision to delegate privatisation decisions to local offices, saying it risked missing "opportunities to maximise efficiency savings arising from rationalisation of the forest estate at a national level".

But it was not clear from the report whether Sir John Bourn, the Comptroller and Auditor General, felt the blame lay with the commission or Malcolm Rifkind, the former Secretary of State for Scotland who ordered a 100,000-hectare privatisation in 1989 in the hope of raising £150m by the end of the century.

Sales were suspended on 19 March 1997, with the calling of the last general election, by which time the commission had sold off 65,674 hectares and raised £75m of the £150m target.

Since the election, the commission planned to raise £20m from the completion of sales that were in the pipeline when the election was called, but the new Government has since imposed a moratorium on further large-scale forest sales, in line with its manifesto commitment. This year, the commission

hopes to raise another £25m from a sale of surplus assets, mostly "from the previously agreed surrender of leasehold interest in a relatively small piece of land approved for housing development, with the balance from sale of buildings, bare land and small isolated blocks of forest which contribute little to the commission's objectives".

That leaves the commission with a 1.1m-hectare estate, worth £1.56bn, of which 850,000 hectares are planted with trees. But as further large-scale sales from that estate are now blocked by the Government, today's report will have no bearing on any future Government action.

However, the report does suggest Tory ministers gave the commission conflicting instructions, which meant that there was a difficulty over maintaining public access to some of the forest land that was sold off.

The commission took legal advice in April 1989, before Mr Rifkind issued his final privatisation order, suggesting that it could grant leases on land, with enforceable conditions requiring tenants to allow public access.

But Sir John's auditors were told by the commission that they had no alternative but to make freehold sales. "They told us that they needed to sell the freehold in order to comply with ministerial directions."

"They also considered that the costs associated with retaining management responsibility for leased land, undertaking complex conveyancing of leases and enforcing lease conditions, would not lead to the efficiency benefits expected from rationalisation being achieved."

## Fury over paedophile's escape

ANTI-paedophile campaigners reacted angrily yesterday after a convicted child-sex offender escaped on an escorted visit to a swimming pool.

David Marker, 62, has been held in secure hospitals since 1965 after he was convicted of indecent assault, thought to be on a seven-year-old girl. But he is now on the loose after slipping away from two guards at Abraham Moss leisure centre in Crumpsall, Manchester on Wednesday.

The trip was part of a rehabilitation programme preparing him to be released back into the community.

The Department of Health said a Mental Health Tribunal

had sanctioned his conditional discharge after hearing evidence that he represented no danger to the public.

But Julie Roberts from Parasol, a group campaigning for stricter anti-paedophile laws, said the situation was a "farce".

"It is an absolute disgrace they were even thinking of letting him out..."

"Anybody, male or female, that has abused a child should be locked away for good."

Peter Garsden, from Manchester-based paedophile monitoring group Abuse Watch, said: "We are extremely concerned for the parents of any child in the community that could fall prey to this man."

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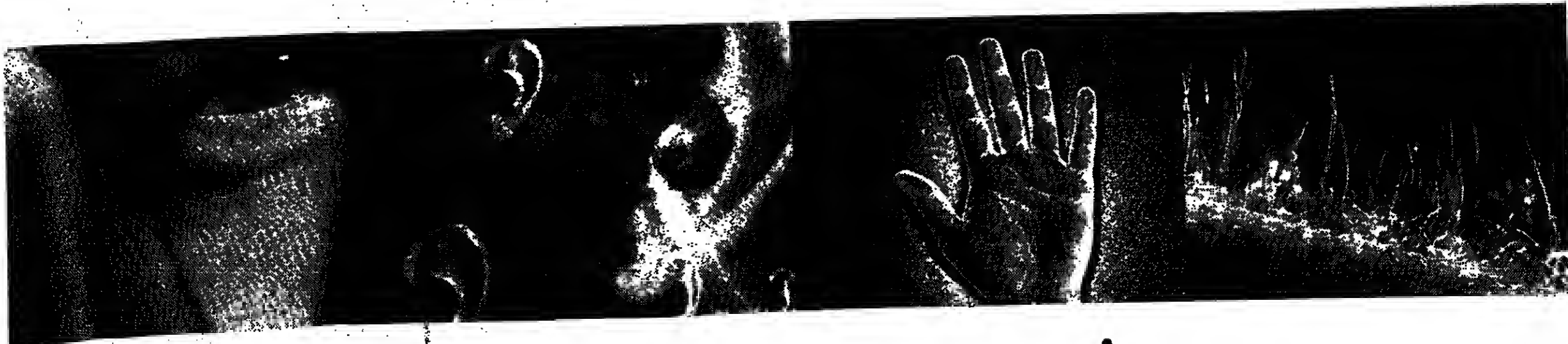


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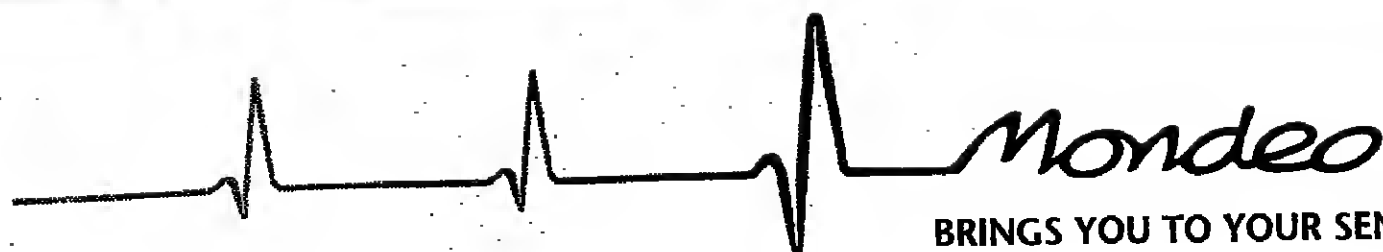


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## Christie's to auction rare first edition of 'Canterbury Tales'

By Kate Watson-Smyth

A FIRST edition copy of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, the first book to be printed in England, is expected to raise at least £500,000 when it is auctioned in July.

The book was printed in 1477 by William Caxton at his workshop in Westminster Abbey and only 12 copies are known to exist.

This edition is the last remaining copy in private hands and was acquired by William, 4th Earl Fitzwilliam at an auction of books at Christie's in March 1976.

It will be auctioned with other books and works of art belonging to the trustees of Oliver, Countess Fitzwilliam, of Wentworth Woodhouse, Yorkshire.

The collection was started by Thomas Wentworth, Earl of Strafford, who died in 1641,

and added to by his descendants. Christie's, which is handling the auction, said it was one of the country's most important collections.

The sale includes a painting by Stubbs and a Van Dyck portrait which is expected to fetch around £3m.

Lord Hindlip, the chairman of Christie's said: "This is one of the most important collections of works of art to be offered at auction since the celebrated sales of works of art from Houghton in 1994 and from the Bute family collection in 1996.

"The proceeds of the sale will protect the future of the family and the remainder of the collection, one of the most important in private hands in this country."

The Wentworth family has had the land at Wentworth Woodhouse since the 13th century.



Rare volumes: The first edition copy of *Canterbury Tales* which will be auctioned in the summer Photograph: Philip Meech

## Lawrence witness ignored for 5 years

A VITAL witness to the murder of Stephen Lawrence was not asked to provide an artist's impression of his attackers for five years, he said yesterday.

He was amazed to receive a telephone call from the police last month asking him to do an E-fit - a computer-enhanced impression.

But Roy Westbrook told the public inquiry into Stephen Lawrence's death that, after speaking to an expert at Scotland Yard, he was told it was too late to be any good.

Mr Westbrook said he was told his description was now likely to be "recognition rather than recollection".

He said he was not approached in 1993 when he saw a gang of white youths stab the black 18-year-old student near a bus stop in Eltham, south London.

But a few hours after being told he would be needed as a witness to the public inquiry in London, Mr Westbrook, a support worker for people with learning difficulties, said he had a number of messages about a photofit on his answering machine.

"I found it very puzzling" he told the inquiry in south London. "I spoke to someone at Scotland Yard about it and was told it would be recognition rather than recollection. It was far too late."

Mr Westbrook said he saw Stephen Lawrence and his friend Duane Brooks being chased along the road by a group of white youths.

They surrounded Stephen and attacked him. "He was swallowed up by the weight of the boys and forced to the ground," he added.

A man standing at the bus stop had commented that "he got a good pasting, didn't he?"



Lawrence: Photofit 'too late'

It was probably because he was black."

He was later asked to go to identity parades but left after waiting at the police station for nine hours.

He and other witnesses had been left for long periods to talk to each other and a woman became flustered after being asked for her address.

Another witness, Joseph Shepherd, the inquiry was told, went to one identity parade but had refused to do any others after an inspector called out his name.

Inspector Laurence Slooe said he used the name to identify the witness. He said: "It was behind closed doors and it was in a conversational voice. If the suspect did hear the name, then I regret that."

No one has been convicted of Stephen Lawrence's murder. Neil Acourt, 21, Gary Dobson, 21, and Luke Knight, 20, were cleared of the murder at the Old Bailey in 1996. The case against David Norris, 20, and Jamie Acourt, 19, never came to trial.

The inquiry will sit again on Tuesday.

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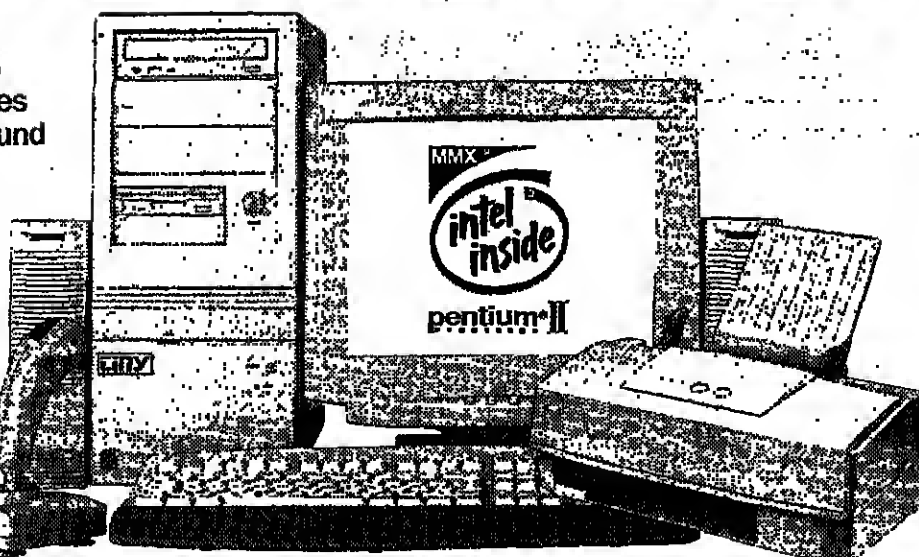
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## Ministers in rift over Dounreay nuclear shipment

By Colin Brown  
Chief Political Correspondent

MARGARET Beckett and Robin Cook were involved in a furious row before the Government agreed to accept a five-kilogram shipment of enriched uranium from Georgia for reprocessing and disposal at the Dounreay plant in Scotland, it emerged last night.

The disclosure of a ministerial split undermined the attempts by Downing Street to smooth over the secret deal between Tony Blair and US President Bill Clinton for Britain to take the shipment to avert the risk of it falling into wrong hands.

The President of the Board of Trade and the "green" minister at the Department of Trade and Industry, John Birt, blocked on "at least a dozen occasions" plans to ship enriched uranium for reprocessing, it was confirmed by Whitehall sources.

"Margaret and John took a very principled stand on this one. We were fed up with the Foreign Office saying: 'We are the ones with an ethical foreign policy and the DTI is unethical,' one senior source said.

The disclosure that the two ministers refused to sanction the shipment - which took place without incident seven days ago - is likely to strengthen protests to Scotland over the decision to accept shipments from the former Soviet republic.

It emerged yesterday that the deal came close to collapse. Senior DTI figures were angry at what they saw as both an attempt to pass the buck and "ethical posturing" by the Foreign Office.

After being first raised in late summer, the proposal was not agreed by DTI ministers until shortly before the turn of the year.

The ministers eventually agreed to sign the licence only on condition that the Foreign Office would take any political flak from the announcement.

Questions about the shipment, when news leaked in Washington, were handled last week by the Foreign Office, and the Foreign Office minister, Doug Henderson, dealt with an emergency statement in the House.

The trade ministers also signed because they were fearful that a separate deal they were brokering to bail out British coal mines might not dig in over the nuclear issue.

But the ministers were unhappy at being pressurised by Mr Cook and his officials to overturn its principle that no nuclear material would be reprocessed unless it was later returned to its country of origin.

Downing Street continued to insist yesterday that it was agreed through the "appropriate cabinet committee in the usual way".

Mr Birt said: "Questions have always to be asked as policy is prepared but there is no doubt that accepting this fuel contributes to international nuclear non-proliferation. I think this was the right decision."

"I am absolutely convinced it is in safe hands at Dounreay. It is much safer there than anywhere else in the world."

A senior Foreign Office spokesman said: "It was the Government's decision to do what we did."

"It was a government decision in which the Prime Minister was closely involved and which followed consultations with the Americans and other partners over a long period."

"It really is not helpful or accurate to portray this in terms of a division between two government departments. This is a government decision."

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# MMR study dismisses fears as groundless

By Jeremy Laurence  
Health Editor

A MAJOR study of children who had the triple MMR vaccine against measles mumps and rubella has found no evidence of a link with bowel disease and autism.

Public confidence in the MMR vaccine was severely dented two months ago when researchers at the Royal Free Hospital, London, published a

study of 12 children with bowel disease and autism in the *Lancet* which suggested there might be a connection with the vaccine.

In some areas of the country, up to 25 per cent of parents refused permission for their children to have the triple vaccine, which is normally given in the second year of life, after one of the researchers, Dr Andrew Wakefield, recommended that it should be split into its com-

ponent parts and given separately to reduce the shock to the developing immune system.

A subsequent meeting of 37 scientists brought together by the Medical Research Council at the request of Sir Kenneth Calman, the Government's Chief Medical Officer, concluded there was no reason to change current vaccination practice. However, parents have continued to refuse MMR and the health department is con-

sidering an advertising campaign to restore public confidence.

Now scientists in Finland have found further evidence for the safety of the vaccine. Researchers from Helsinki University traced children who received the vaccine over 14 years between 1982 and 1996. Around 3 million doses of vaccine were given but there were no cases of autism or any similar syndrome.

The researchers, who publish their findings in tomorrow's *Lancet*, found 31 children developed symptoms such as fever, diarrhoea and vomiting within 15 days of the vaccination but most recovered within a week. A one-year-old boy had diarrhoea for six weeks but he recovered and was healthy six years later.

The researchers conclude that "over a decade's effort to detect all severe adverse events associated with MMR vaccine could find no data supporting the hypothesis that it could cause pervasive developmental disorder (autism) or inflammatory bowel disease."

The Royal Free study is challenged in a second series of letters in the *Lancet*. Dr David Walker, of the department of public health medicine at Durham health authority, describes the association between the vaccine and the diseases as

"anecdotal reporting of a biased sample". He says it is "poor science which has no place in a peer-reviewed journal".

Defending his decision to publish, Dr Richard Horton, editor of the *Lancet*, said: "The description of what seems to be a new syndrome and its relation to possible environmental triggers was original. Peer review confirmed that the paper merited publication." He added that "other investigators must

urgently seek to confirm or refute" the findings. The Finnish researchers are the first to do so.

Sir Kenneth Calman has ruled out making the three vaccines available separately to parents who requested them on the grounds that it would be "bad medicine." It would mean children having three injections instead of one and exposed them to the risk of going for two years without at least one vaccine during a critical period.

## 'Desperate bid' to shift E.coli meat

By Charles Arthur  
Science and Technology Editor

A LEADING Scottish food chain mounted a desperate mission to clear potentially deadly food from its shelves after receiving incorrect advice from the butcher at the centre of an *E.coli* food poisoning scare, an inquiry heard yesterday.

After hearing media reports of a food poisoning scare at an old people's home, John Skedzieleuski, fresh food controller for the food chain Scotmid, called John Barr, the Lanarkshire butcher at the centre of an *E.coli* food poisoning scare, on Sunday morning, 24 November 1996. But Mr Barr reassured him that there was nothing to worry about because he only supplied the chain with sausages, not cooked meat.

In theory, cooked meat poses a greater risk of causing food poisoning than uncooked sausages, because the cooking process should kill off any harmful organisms. But contaminated cooked meat would pose a serious risk to consumers.

Giving evidence to the fatal accident inquiry into the *E.coli* O157 outbreak, Mr Skedzieleuski said: "I phoned Mr Barr and asked him what the situation was. He said this was nothing to do with us, there was no problem. It was just cooked meat, and he did not supply us with cooked meat."

He said Mr Barr had sounded "upset" during the telephone conversation, and had told him he had withdrawn cooked meat from sale at his own premises. The outbreak was the world's worst *E.coli* outbreak: 21 elderly people died.

Mr Skedzieleuski later arranged with fellow staff to telephone round every Scotmid store that was open that Sunday to remove all John Barr sausage products from their shelves - as these were the only Barr prod-

ucts he believed they had.

On Monday, other Scotmid stores were told to follow suit. But Mr Skedzieleuski was told by environmental health officials that cooked meat from Mr Barr's shop had been supplied to three of its six stores in Bonnybridge, central Scotland.

The chain immediately despatched a seven-man team to the town to make sure that cooked meat was removed from sale and that a thorough cleaning operation was carried out at the stores.

Mr Skedzieleuski told Paul Cullen QC, for Scotmid, that during the Sunday telephone conversation Mr Barr had not mentioned that he had been visited by environmental health officials, nor that he had been asked to remove the cooked meats from his own shop.

The inquiry has already been told that five residents of a nursing home for the elderly had that weekend eaten sandwiches made with cooked meat supplied by a local Scotmid store.

The inquiry in Motherwell heard yesterday that some food shops would not have known that meat they were selling came from John Barr.

John McKelvey, a meat distributor, told the inquiry that he made deliveries to several shops throughout central Scotland, supplying them with some products of John Barr.

He said he bought his supplies from another company, Devine Quality Meats of Motherwell, which in turn bought supplies of some top-of-the-range meat such as roast silver-side from John Barr.

He said he collected his supplies from Devine, but the Barr products were not labelled as having come from Mr Barr's shop. In response to questioning, he agreed that when he made his daily deliveries to shops, they would not necessarily know that John Barr was the ultimate source of some items, like roast beef.

The inquiry continues.

## Masks and basques at Britain's second festival of erotica



Dancers prepare to go on stage during the second 'Erotica' festival at Olympia, London, yesterday. The event runs until Sunday

Photograph: Andrew Buurman

## Naval prang dents pride of woman commander

A PATROL boat controlled by a woman who broke centuries of male supremacy at sea by becoming one of the Navy's warship commanders has been involved in a collision.

Just days after Lt Sue Moore took control of HMS *Dasher*, it collided with another ship as it was berthing in St Peter Port, Guernsey. A Navy spokesman said the collision was minor.

"From what I understand, it was a berthing incident when *Dasher* pulled up alongside HMS *Puncher*. It is a very tight manoeuvre. We are working in a dynamic environment where things like this happen. It is not all that unusual."

Lt Moore, 26, from Bath,

was selected for a command post after competing against male colleagues.

The Navy spokesman said Lt Moore's 49-tonne 68ft patrol boat was not damaged in the collision although HMS *Puncher* suffered minor damage. He added that both ships - which are used as training vessels - were now back at sea, and no action would be taken against Lt Moore.

"When something happens the commanding officers reports it. The authorities look at it and in some cases there would be action taken. But in circumstances like this one they recognise these things happen from time to time." About 30 such incidents are reported each year.

## US officials keep freed Briton in jail as an illegal immigrant

By Steve Boggan

A BRITISH woman released early from an attempted murder sentence in the United States - in charge which she always denied - has been held in prison because she is deemed an "illegal immigrant".

Sally Croft, 47, who fought extradition to the US for 10 years, was freed by a judge but is being kept in her cell because of American immigration bureaucracy.

When she was extradited against her will, handcuffed to US marshals, Ms Croft, formerly a senior accountant with a large British consultancy firm, was taken through normal immigration channels.

As a result, when a judge released her on Tuesday because of her impeccable behaviour teaching other prisoners, she was denied her liberty so preparations could be made to deport her.

"Illegal immigrants are usually people who desperately want to get into America and



Sally Croft: still held

Susan Hagan. The women, former members of the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh sect, based in Antelope, Oregon, were accused of plotting to kill a US Attorney, Charles Turner, while tension between the sect and the Antelope community was running at fever pitch in 1985. Mr Turner was never actually harmed.

The women were sentenced to five years in prison in 1995 after being extradited amid a clamour of protest from MPs but were freed by their original trial judge, Malcolm Marsh, who paid tribute to the work they carried out at the Federal Correctional Institute Dublin near San Francisco.

Releasing the women after two years and four months, Judge Marsh said: "In fashioning their sentences, I assumed that the defendants would perform well while in prison. I did not, however, anticipate the magnitude of the defendants' assistance to other inmates and the prison's programmes."

Both women worked as teachers from 9am to 5pm, five

days a week, helping inmates with learning difficulties.

Ms Hagan, 50, an aromatherapist, was freed immediately because of the death of her father several days ago. She is expected to attend his funeral today.

"This was the final humiliation for Sally," said Mr Parlett. "She was initially elated but then depressed that they continued to keep her in custody as, of all things, an illegal immigrant. She was also sad that it happened so quickly because she didn't get to say goodbye to any of the friends she made and, because she is being deported, she won't be able to go back to see them. We expect her to be released in a day or two."

No comment was available from the American Embassy in London yesterday. All attempts to penetrate its computerised switchboard proved fruitless.

Yesterday, *The Independent* referred to the women's membership of the Bhagwan's sect "at the time of the killing". This was an error as, of course, there was no "killing".

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Pulling out: The former First Lady of the Philippines, Imelda Marcos, comforting two weeping supporters moments before she filed a motion to withdraw from the presidential elections, scheduled for 11 May. Her withdrawal reduces the number of candidates to 10. Photograph: Alex de Rosa/AFP

## Albright's Tibet plea falls on deaf ears in China

MADELEINE Albright, the US Secretary of State, yesterday said differences over human rights and political freedoms "remain obstacles to a fully comprehensive partnership" between America and China, writes Teresa Ponle.

Winding up a two-day visit

to Peking during which she met senior Chinese leaders, Mrs Albright said: "I raised our concerns quite directly about religious freedom, Tibet, the right to free and peaceful expression of political views, and the still large numbers of Chinese prisoners of conscience."

She left behind a list of political prisoners and also urged Peking to re-open a dialogue with the Dalai Lama, the exiled spiritual leader of Tibet.

Mrs Albright's trip to China was one of several high-level visits ahead of President Bill Clinton's scheduled arrival at the

end of June, the first state visit by a US president since the 1989 Tiananmen Square massacre. Her entourage included the new US Special Co-ordinator on Tibet, Greg Craig, an appointment which has been criticised by Peking. "It is very important for there to be

preservation of the cultural and the religious special character of Tibet," she told a news conference. But her plea for renewed dialogue with the Dalai Lama fell on deaf ears. A Foreign Ministry spokesman said the Tibetan leader had "no sincerity toward dialogue at all".

## Malaysian police 'kidnapping' Indonesia exiles

By Richard Lloyd Parry  
in Kuala Lumpur

MALAYSIAN police snatch squads are abducting exiled opponents of the Indonesian government as part of a secret deal between the two countries, according to human-rights organisations in Kuala Lumpur.

More than 50 people are being held without access to families, doctors or lawyers, according to the groups, many of them legal residents of Malaysia who have been abducted in daylight by plain clothes security personnel. Despite repeated requests, the Malaysian authorities refuse to allow access to the detainees by officials of the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR). There are growing fears that they will be sent back to Indonesia, where they risk imprisonment and torture for their political activities.

In the past two weeks alone, at least nine people are reported to have been arrested, and are being held incommunicado in unknown locations.

According to Suaram, a Malaysian rights group, individuals have been kidnapped from their homes, their shops, and while standing at a bus stop in Kuala Lumpur. One man, Ishak Bin Mohammad Daud, was stopped in his car in which he was travelling with two companions. They were allowed to go, but he has not been seen since. Yesterday, lawyers acting on his behalf were told by Malaysian police that they knew nothing of his whereabouts.

The abductees are all from Aceh, the northernmost province of Sumatra, where Islamic guerrillas have been fighting a sporadic war of independence since the 1950s. After a wave of suppression in the early 1990s, when at least 2000 Acehnese were killed or abducted by the Indonesian army, members of a group calling itself the Aceh/Sumatra National Liberation Front (ASNLFF) fled to Malaysia. Some lived without proper documents, but others obtained residence permits from the Malaysian government.

Illegal immigrants caught by police, including several hundred from Aceh, were held in detention camps. Recently their numbers have been increased by large numbers of new "illegals" who have sailed to Malaysia to escape the economic crisis in Indonesia. Human-rights groups believe the Malaysian government is using the mass deportation of "illegals" as an excuse to deport legitimate asylum-seekers at the behest of Indonesia. Several ASNLFF members have gone into hiding, and their houses are being watched by police. "Just yesterday the home of one of our members was raided," an ASNLFF spokesman said. "He wasn't there, but his wife and children were very afraid."

Syed Husin Ali, of the opposition Malaysian People's Party, said: "It is just beginning. They're taking the opportunity of the economic crisis to expel the new illegals and at the same time to round up the Acehnese. We believe they have been asked to do this by the Indonesian government."

## Mahathir bans 'Independent' in blast at press

Malaysia fury over 'poisoned' refugees

Monday's article attacked by the Malaysian Prime Minister, which was about alleged brutality against illegal immigrants

By Richard Lloyd Parry

TWO British newspapers, including the *Independent*, have been banned in Malaysia after an outburst by the Prime Minister, Mahathir Mohamad, who accused British journalists of trying to "destroy" Malaysia and blamed them for the economic crisis besetting the region.

Copies of last Monday's *Independent* and Sunday's *Observer* have been impounded because they carried articles on alleged brutality against illegal immigrants. Distributors in Kuala Lumpur do not know when, if at all, they will be made available again for sale.

Malaysian papers yesterday carried remarks by Dr Mahathir denying allegations that Malaysian police poisoned, beat and shot dead Indonesian migrant workers in camps while rounding them up for deportation. "Why should we kill people?" he was quoted as saying by the *Sun* newspaper. "They [the British media] are the ones who are doing it as a way to cover up their role in reducing Indonesia to a state of poverty and creating unemployment there."

"Their poison is to make Indonesia poorer, to devalue the rupiah, to make 20 million Indonesians unemployed. These problems and others... are not caused by the Indonesian government but by those who wrote such reports."

When asked about his government's refusal to allow access to the camps, Dr Mahathir said: "Human-rights groups would not be satisfied until the detainees are placed in five-star hotels. If the human-rights groups are willing to finance, we are willing to put them in Shangri-La" (one of Kuala Lumpur's most expensive ho-

tel). Dr Mahathir is noted for his trenchant reaction to external criticism. Last year he said a Jewish conspiracy, masterminded by the American financier George Soros, was behind Malaysia's economic troubles.

A spokesperson for Marican, which distributes the *Independent*, said foreign papers are always delayed when they contain articles on sensitive subjects. "Sometimes they release it and black the article out, sometimes they release it without that page," the spokesperson said.

The decision is made by the Prime Minister's office. "It goes right to Dr Mahathir, or at least to his officials." The *Independent's* typical daily circulation in Malaysia is 16 copies.

A Malaysian MP Lim Guan Eng, has been given 18 months' jail for having printed a pamphlet that questioned Malaysia's political system. Though his last appeal will be heard by the Federal Court, he expects to lose, AP reports.

He and his father, MPs for a combined 41 years, believe that as Malaysia struggles against economic collapse, the opposition has become scapegoats. Mr Lim was convicted last year on charges of sedition and printing false news in a pamphlet in 1995 entitled "The True Story." The Court of Appeal in April then stiffened his penalty and sentenced him to two 18-month, concurrent sentences for each charge. In the pamphlet, he questioned the government's decision not to press statutory rape charges against a former governor of Malacca state. He also demanded to know why the 15-year-old girl was detained for months in "protective custody" after she told prosecutors about Abdul Rahim.

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# Israelis celebrate, as the Palestinians mourn

Patrick Cockburn in Jerusalem sees the jubilee marked with a show of force underlining religious and other rifts

ISRAEL yesterday celebrated 50 years of independence, while Palestinians mourned defeat. To open the celebrations 60 trumpeters blew rams' horns on Mount Herzl in Jerusalem while Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, said: "What we have achieved is nothing short of a miracle."

As the festivities got under way, with dancing in the streets and fireworks, Al Gore, the US Vice-President, arrived for talks preceding the meeting on the Arab-Israeli conflict in London next week. His officials said he was "not going to negotiate or mediate." The Palestinians have already accepted a US plan by which 13 per cent of the West Bank would be returned to them: Israel says it is only willing to cede 9 per cent.

Celebrations included a fly-past by the air force, a naval display and the dropping of paratroopers no Tel Aviv beach. A flight by a Spitfire dating from the War of Independence in 1948 had to be cancelled because of mechanical troubles. Parks were open for free for picnickers and further diversion was provided by ultra-Orthodox



objections to a display by modern dancers at the "Jubilee Bells" festival last night. The dancers were reported to be intending to strip down to their underwear.

The anniversary celebrations appear finally to have ignited some enthusiasm among Israelis. Previously they appeared to have had more impact in the foreign media than in Israel itself.

Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza are banned from entering Israel while the celebrations continue. Right-wingers were planning to demonstrate at Har Homa, the Jewish settlement between Jerusalem and Bethlehem, called Jebel Abu Ghneim by the Palestinians. Israeli peace activists planned a counter-demonstration. Slogans painted on walls read "Hill of Blood"

and "Har Homa equals war." Shimon Peres, the former Israeli prime minister, said in an interview: "I think for the future of Israel and in order for Israel to remain a Jewish state we need a Palestinian state. Otherwise we shall have a binational state and if you ask me a binational tragedy." There was heavier than usual Israeli security in Jerusalem, with Israeli troops guarding the entrances into the old city, which is largely Palestinian.

Mr Gore, officially representing the US, told Israelis: "America will never let you stand alone." He later attended the "Jubilee Bells" celebration. He will fly on to Saudi Arabia to meet Crown Prince Abdullah and then return to meet Yasser Arafat, the Palestinian leader, in the West Bank town of Ramallah.



Right-wingers, demanding the right to live anywhere in Jerusalem, on the march yesterday near the Har Homa settlement site



Anti-settlement activists from the Peace Now group staging a counter-march against the pro-settler lobby

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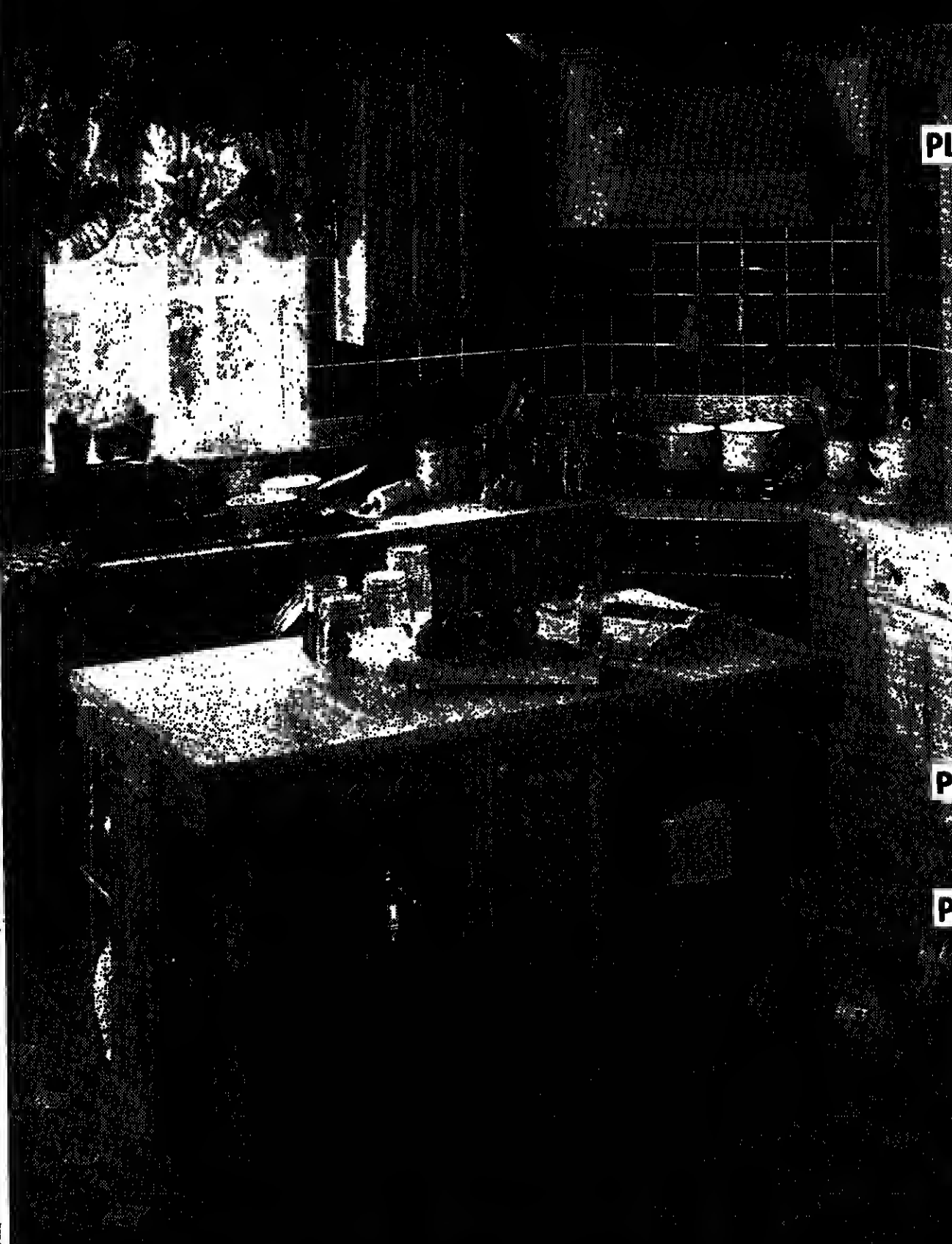
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## Roddick brings images of plenty to stoical farmers in an Italian backwater

Calabria scents change of fortune as Body Shop champions its bergamot crop, writes Anne Hanley

ANTONINO PORCINO has 10 hectares of bergamot trees in Calabria and a son who is a research scientist in Surrey. Mr Porcino let his bergamots - large mutant lemons with a distinctive Earl Grey perfume - rot on his trees last season, but would not dream of suggesting that his son should come home to revive the family farm.

"I keep the trees because they've always been there. They're part of our history," he said. "But we could never have made a living out of them, and we never will."

Mr Porcino did not say that to the Body Shop founder and chief executive Anita Roddick when she visited this depressed, crime-plagued region of southern Italy this week.

Indeed, far from giving her a taste of local stoicism, he had some of his over-ripe bergamots plucked from his trees, shipped to a local factory, and hurled into an extracting machine for her edification.

Mrs Roddick was in Calabria for the press launch of the Body Shop's bergamot range, products made with organically grown essential oil from the region. Here, and only here, the fruit flourishes and yields large quantities of its oil.

But the industry has dwindled since the 1970s when chemical companies came up with cheaper synthetic alternatives to bergamot oil, and the wave of ugly, unfinished buildings began



Calabria is the only place where bergamot flourishes naturally

flowing over the thin strip of beautiful Calabrian coast where this citrus grows best. Never one to bend before the dictates of the chemicals industry, Mrs Roddick came here for her scent.

True to the Body Shop philosophy she and her team came not only for business, but for the good of the area. Indefatigable as always when on the trail of a Good Cause, the Body Shop Community Trade division rooted out the few dogged organic producers, induced a handful more to eschew chemicals, and saved the odd bergamot orchard from the construction industry's axes. They dealt directly with the farmers, thus removing them from under the thumb of lackadaisical (or, maybe, un-

scrupulous) local oil extractors who year after year have paid producers less. For now, the Body Shop is taking only around 3 per cent of oil produced annually "though if the bergamot range sells well, we will be seeking to increase that", said Simone Mizzi, head of operations in Italy.

Even at this early stage, however, Ms Mizzi has noble aspirations for the Calabrian initiative. "This region has two big problems: unemployment, which reaches 65 per cent amongst young people, and the break-up of the traditional Calabrian extended family. We hope to do our bit to solve them both," she said.

The locals are happy to go along with

the whole thing, though they have slightly different expectations. "It will definitely stop some bergamot trees being grubbed up and replaced with cash crops," said Diego Latella of the As-soberg producers' association from which the Body Shop is buying its oil. "But most of all, it's great publicity."

"It may generate some jobs," said Giuseppe Nistico, president of Calabria's regional council. "More than anything else, it's good to have an international company working in the region. It's all about image, really."

Mr Nistico, a pharmacologist by trade and very keen on routing bergamot's anti-viral properties in the fight against Aids, was rather dismissive of the Body Shop project, and miffed that the British company had waved aside the region's offers of tax breaks in exchange for setting up new joint venture companies with local entrepreneurs. "But we can create small-sized firms ourselves, by using European Union regional funds efficiently," he said, forecasting an ambitious 60,000 more jobs in the near future.

Mr Porcino, on the other hand, is just happy once in a while to be able to put his beloved bergamot fruits to some use. "I'm not expecting to make money out of it, with or without the Body Shop," he said. "Bergamots are something you grow for love, not for money. For the foreseeable future, I'll be telling my son to stay in Surrey."



Anita Roddick among the groves to be used for her products Photograph: Adrian Brooks

## Greenpeace activists seize toxic sludge

By Michael McCarthy  
in Aznalcollar, southern Spain

GREENPEACE activists were involved in violent clashes with security guards yesterday when they took chemical samples from the mine waste reservoir whose rupture and subsequent flood have put at risk the Coto Donana in southern Spain, Europe's largest nature reserve.

Scuffles broke out when the environmental pressure group decided on direct action at the giant multi-metals mine at Aznalcollar in Andalusia owned by the Swedish/Canadian mining multi-national Boliden Apsara.

The company's waste pond, a mile long and half-a-mile wide, burst its banks last weekend, sending 6 million cubic metres of highly-polluted water and toxic sludge into the rivers Guadamar and Guadalquivir and so on down towards the Coto Donana National Park with its colonies of rare birds.

The pollution was diverted before it reached the park, but has contaminated much of the surrounding area. Greenpeace complained that the company will not give details of the sludge's precise toxicity, and that the waste pond was still leaking into the adjacent river.

Yesterday, the reservoir was invaded by the MV *Greenpeace*, the group's ship, which had sailed to Sanlucar De Barrameda at the mouth of the Guadalquivir to put the pollution under an international spotlight. Led by the ship's Swiss captain Peter Schwarz, a dozen Greenpeace activists scaled the 100ft high walls of the waste pond and ran down to its now empty floor, scooping up sludge samples for chemical analysis.

Security guards converged on them from all over the reservoir and in the scuffles that followed, the activists claimed, rocks were thrown, a camera smashed and Greenpeace members threatened with a gun. One of the group's biologists, Pablo Mascareñas, was detained by the guards but later released. However, the group got away with its samples, which will be sent to the University of Barcelona for analysis.

"We want to establish exactly what the toxicity is," said Eva Hernandez, habitats' campaigner for Greenpeace Spain. "The government and the company are not saying. We know there are heavy metals in it, but they won't say what and they won't give out a list, so we will do an analysis of our own."

The management at the mine north of Seville distanced it from the security guards' actions, which was "too tough", according to spokesman Anders Ampomsson. "It's too tough a way to handle these issues."

Mr Ampomsson said a very small amount of waste was still leaking from the reservoir. He was not prepared to say what the waste contained precisely, but added: "We have taken some samples, but we haven't analysed them yet. We are prepared to do whatever is required, and we are waiting for the authorities to give us permission to get on with it. They haven't told us anything yet."

Yesterday the company's president, Anders Bulow, went to inspect the waste pond with the President of the Andalusian regional government, Manuel Chaves. Later, it was announced that a special team was being formed to cope with the clean-up and compensation operations.

It was not a moment too soon for the World Wide Fund for Nature, whose Spanish office yesterday lambasted the lack of co-ordination between government agencies and institutions in response to the incident.

## France gets jobless rate down to below 3 million

THE official number of jobless people in France has fallen below 3,000,000 for the first time in three years. France, coming steadily out of a long economic slumber, has been creating more jobs than other industrial countries over the past 10 months. In March its unemployment rate fell to 12 per cent. Further falls are confidently anticipated this year. The Socialist-led government of Lionel Jospin claims the credit for the improving jobs market. Other economic commentators point to the fall of the franc against the dollar, which has further boosted exports.

— John Lichfield, Paris

## Oslo tables Holocaust deal

THE Norwegian Prime Minister, Kjell Bondevik, proposed a "moral and ethical settlement" for Norway's Holocaust victims that could cost the country up to £38m. The proposal comes nearly a year after Norway was stung by criticism for failing to establish a level of compensation. About a third of Norway's pre-war community of 2,100 Jews died in the Holocaust. When survivors returned from Nazi internment, they got little help. Much of their property had been seized, and was never returned.

— AP Oslo

## Pope looks homeward

PRESIDENT Aleksander Kwasniewski officially invited the Pope to visit his native Poland. Poland's Primate, Cardinal Jozef Glemp, said earlier that the trip was likely to be in June next year - the 77-year-old Pontiff's eighth visit to his homeland since he was elected in 1978.

— Reuters, Warsaw

## 'Linda lunch' for Romans

THOUSANDS of Rome schoolchildren sat down to a meat-free "Linda lunch" in memory of the late vegetarian animal-rights campaigner Linda McCartney. The children feasted on dishes including potato and courgette pizzas, tomato and mozzarella cheese salads and pasta with vegetable sauce.

— Reuters, Rome

## Serbs killed in Kosovo

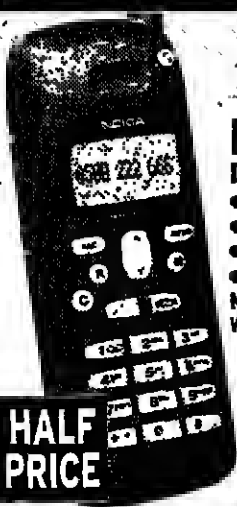
PRISTINA (AP) — The Serbian authorities yesterday sent police to prevent Albanian students from entering the main university in Kosovo. News of the killing of three Serbs by Albanian militants added to tensions. The students were turned away by hundreds of riot police despite a Serb-Albanian agreement last month to permit Albanians to return to university premises in the Kosovo capital Pristina that they have boycotted in protest against Serbian rule in the province.

Among the three Serbs reported killed was a policeman killed by a mortar attack on police station in southern Kosovo. Serb police sources claimed the attack was carried out by the Kosovo Liberation Army, who are fighting for Kosovo's independence. In western Kosovo the bodies of two Serbs, believed to have been kidnapped by Albanian militants a week ago, were found yesterday.

On Wednesday, the United States and its allies crafted a mix of incentives and penalties - including a freeze on Serbian assets abroad - to stop the Kosovo crackdown.

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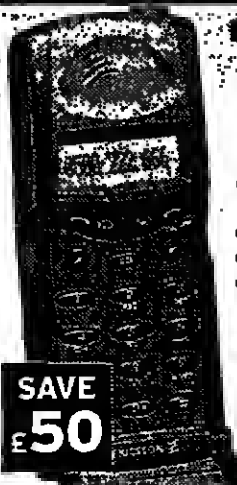
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## Flowery sentiments wilt as Secretaries Day gets the cash message

**Y**OU WILL appreciate the vital significance of Secretaries Day in the US when you recall that one of the chief claims made by Paula Jones, who alleges you-know-who did you-know-what to her in a hotel room in Arkansas seven years ago, was that she did not receive flowers on Secretaries Day - an omission she interpreted as punishment for non-compliance. Whether she did or not (get flowers, of course) is actually the subject of intricate legal argument: one witness said the non-bouquet was a simple oversight, another - that flowers were sent, but she was away, and a third - that she had given specific orders for any flowers to be left without water in will.

Well, Secretaries Day fell last week and I regret to say our office assistant (not secretary, please) did not get flowers, perfume or lunch at my, or the *Independent's*, expense. This was not because of anything she had done or not done - but because I was meeting my deadline, and anyway, I regard the whole business as a commercialised and condescending charade, designed to make up for what is still, even in this land of aggressive equal opportunity, a distinctly unequal male-female relationship.

To my amazement, there are others of like mind. As a certain Joanna Torrey said in a letter that day in *USA Today*: "Floral tributes instantly mire the secretary-boss relationship in an uneasy emotional context presuming an intimacy that neither exists nor is invited. At the risk of sounding ungrateful ... what secretaries really would like is money."

### WASHINGTON DIARY



Mary Dejevsky

**T**HE US media are working themselves up into a lather of indignation about the imminent appearance of Teletubby toys in US shops. Reporters are digging

out all manner of lobbyists and "concerned" parents to condemn what they see as the immoral, reprehensible and regrettable targeting of a "gap market" of one-to-two-year-olds. Aren't the innocents exposed in commercial pressures early enough (two onwards), they wait, is nothing sacred? As though these "innocents" were not already planted in front of the television half the day, as though child-targeted commercials between children's programmes were something new, as though American schools were not selling their souls to give Coca-Cola and other companies "exclusive" marketing rights on campus in return for a new sports hall, computers or text books. Hello-o-o, as they say here: with a particular curling in-

fection, what are these people talking about? Could their sudden distaste for raising the consumer consciousness of toddlers have anything to do with the fact that Teletubbies are "foreign", and already a runaway success?

**A**T THE RIPE old age of 60, Jane Fonda is still as refreshingly disdainful of tact as ever. At a recent UN round table she had less than kind words for her adopted state of Georgia, where she lives with her media millionaire husband, Ted Turner. There were parts in the north of the state, she said, that resembled a Third World country, with children "starving to death" and "people who live in tarpaper shacks with no indoor plumbing".

The Governor, Zell Miller, who felt slighted by this slur, objected, accusing her of seeing everything from her penthouse apartment in Atlanta, where "maybe the view is not as clear as it needs to be".

Ms Fonda offered a generous apology: "I was wrong; I should not have said what I said. My comments were inaccurate and ill-advised." At which point a cavalier rushed in to rescue her - former Georgia governor, US president and peanut farmer Jimmy Carter. In a letter to the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, signed jointly with his wife, Rosalynn, he said that "having worked with her on issues of concern to Georgia's least fortunate, we know that she does not deserve the vituperative condemnation she has received".

## Clinton on hook again over sex-case ruling

By Mary Dejevsky  
in Washington

THE American presidency was threatened with a new crisis yesterday after a judge ruled that Monica Lewinsky, the woman at the centre of White House sex allegations, does not have immunity from prosecution. She could now be summoned to give evidence against Bill Clinton under oath. She may even be indicted for perjury.

The judge's ruling became public just as the White House appeared confident that Mr Clinton had put the most damaging sex allegations behind him. An hour before the news filtered into the media, his office had announced he would give his first solo press conference of the year, concentrating on the flourishing economy.

The leaking of the ruling made it inevitable Mr Clinton's sex life would dominate a major public appearance yet again. But it also brought the "Lewinsky affair" squarely back into centre-stage after a month in which the four-month-old grand-jury investigation opened

by the independent prosecutor, Kenneth Starr, appeared to be languishing.

Ms Lewinsky now faces the prospect of being subpoenaed to testify under oath about the nature of her relationship with Mr Clinton, or even being indicted for perjury. Both she and Mr Clinton have denied under oath there was a sexual relationship between them. But Mr Starr is reported to have evidence from witnesses and photographs, that at least call the denials into question.

Mr Starr also has more than 30 hours of recordings, made secretly by Ms Lewinsky's former colleague and confidante, Linda Tripp, in which Ms Lewinsky is said to recount an affair with the President in salacious detail.

Her lawyer, William Ginsburg, has suggested his client may be given to fantasising, but he also oversaw a written offer of what she would be prepared to tell the grand jury if she were granted immunity.

In this offer, which remains secret, she is believed to have admitted having sex with Mr Clinton, but denied he put pressure on her, or induced her by means of a job offer, to lie about it. This allegation that Mr Clinton suborned her to commit perjury is the most serious charge against him and one on which he could theoretically be impeached.

Two months ago Mr Ginsburg understood her offer of testimony had secured his client immunity from prosecution. Mr Starr, however, denied there had ever been a deal, and his view has now been upheld by a judge. Ms Lewinsky has the option of appealing against the decision; she could also offer more evidence to Mr Starr in a new bid for immunity, or agree to testify but claim the Fifth Amendment - insist on remaining silent because she

would incriminate herself by doing otherwise. Any of these options will leave the scandal in the public eye and could, if his denial of the affair is contested, endanger the President.

Mr Clinton had been shielded from risky exposure to the media since 16 January, when the *Washington Post* reported allegations that he had had an affair with Ms Lewinsky, a former White House trainee, and prevailed upon her to lie about it.

After that, Mr Clinton gave open press conferences only in the company of others - the Palestinian leader, Yasser Arafat, and Tony Blair, among them - with less formal appearances limited to single subjects, like anti-smoking legislation. With the Paula Jones sexual harassment suit dismissed last month and the Lewinsky case apparently running into the sand, questions about Mr Clinton's sex life were receding, and the White House had clearly judged it safe to expose him to the massed ranks of the Washington press corps. That judgment now looks premature.



Monica Lewinsky: Decision that she is not free from prosecution presents new threat to presidency

Photograph: AP

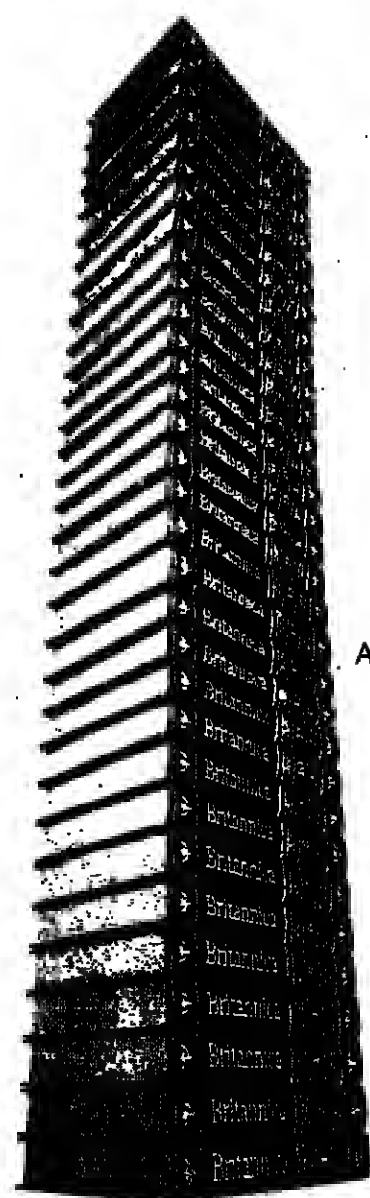
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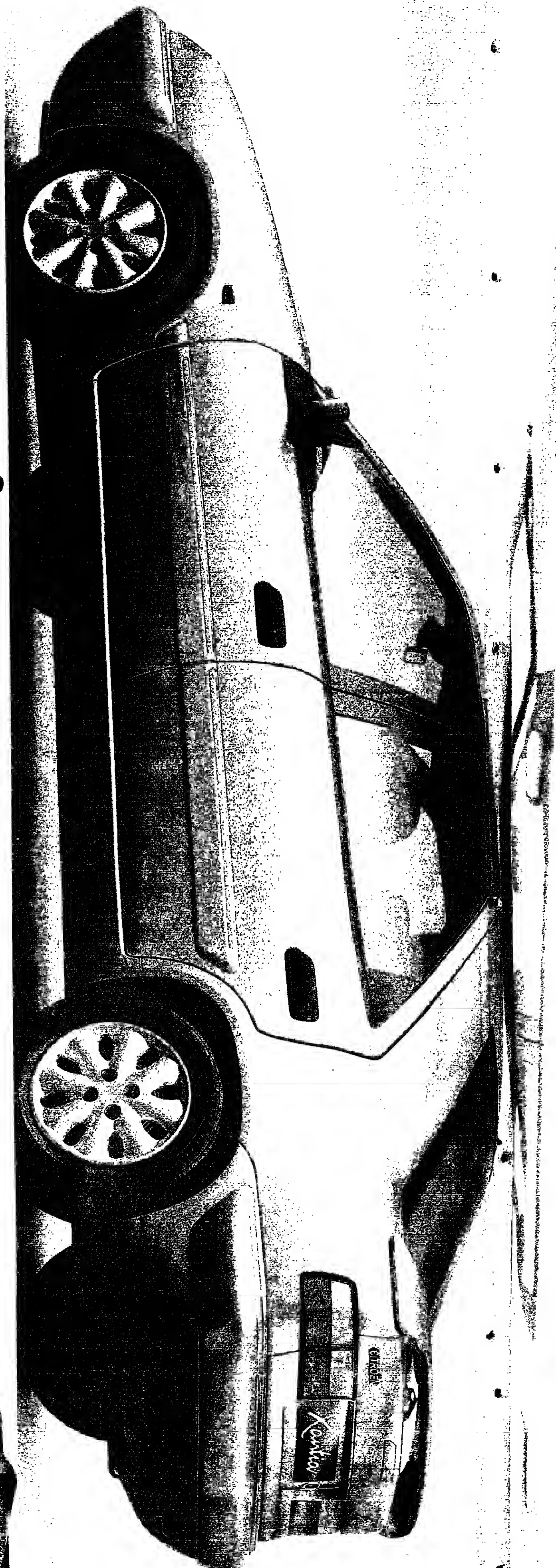
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# EU visionaries enter the euro zone

Experts have warned the European Commission to expect mass confusion as 290 million people experience a currency revolution

By Katherine Butler  
in Brussels

EFFORTS to end the deadlock over the nationality of the man who will take charge of the future European Central Bank are failing to mask a widening rift between France and Germany on the eve of the launch of Emu.

Yesterday, as workmen at the European Union headquarters hammered flagpoles into place and television satellite vans began to arrive for this weekend's summit it seemed that the French, by refusing to withdraw a challenge to the German-backed Dutch candidate, would plunge a truly historic moment into an uneasy crisis.

The summit will set the seal on the most momentous decision in Europe's post-war history. Eleven national currencies including the French franc, the German mark and the Spanish peseta will be abandoned for a new economic unit invested in one money, the euro.

Tomorrow heads of government

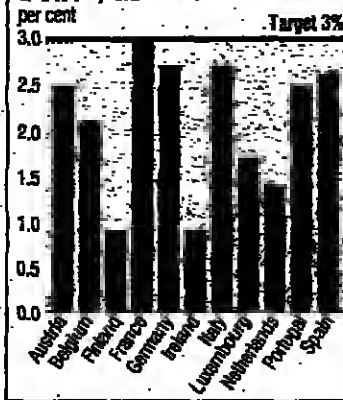
will formalise the creation of the euro zone and confirm that 11 countries – all but Britain, Denmark, Sweden, and Greece – are ready to enter it from January. From tomorrow night, when even the bilateral conversion rates to apply from 1 January 1999 will be decided, the economic and political destinies of the participants will be intertwined more closely than ever before.

It falls to Tony Blair, because Britain has the EU presidency, to confront the French and end the feud over the Central Bank. In The Netherlands today Mr Blair and the Dutch Prime Minister, Wim Kok, will try to agree a strategy to allow the French President, Jacques Chirac, to back down and save face.

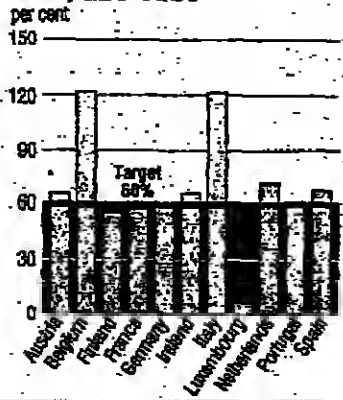
Whatever the outcome, the row has exposed rifts which some fear could undermine credibility in the new money and tear Emu asunder.

Together Bonn and Paris have taken Europe to the launch pad of this unparalleled experiment. Yet the German and French visions of how

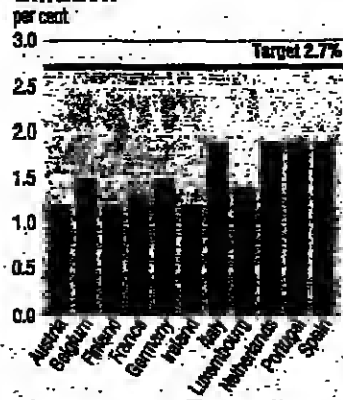
Deficit/GDP ratio



Debt/GDP ratio



Inflation



Because of the draconian conditions set by the Bundesbank, a budgetary strait-jacket will be tied around the zone, robbing governments of much of their economic sovereignty.

But then Emu was always a political wolf in economic clothing. Founded on a bargain struck by French and German visionaries it is being served up as a logical extension of the single market, which will cut costs, help Europe to rival America, spur growth, promote investment and create jobs.

Whether Emu delivers on any of these promises cannot be known yet, but the journey will force the participants into closer political links. But failure to settle the European Central Bank dispute tomorrow will invite claims that the project is unsound because its management will always be at the mercy of conflicting political demands.

The ECB disagreement is also symptomatic of a worrying source of future tension over budgetary discipline and the German obsession with

ensuring that the euro will be as strong as the old Deutschmark. The wedge between France and Germany on this emerged over the stability pact, a mechanism to punish reckless finances.

Now Bonn wants to go further to soothe the fears of Germans about giving up the mark. The Germans want a commitment to a freeze on tax cuts and public spending until everyone is running a healthy surplus.

The biggest problem with this is the French. Their leaders may sign up to budgetary stability but implementing it in a country where governments have traditionally intervened in the economy to create jobs or cushion shocks will be a different matter.

Perhaps of most concern is the extent to which public support for the Euro is still lukewarm. But public opinion has never stopped the EU visionaries. Their dream is within grasp. Whether the price of that dream is too high for ordinary citizens to pay may not be known for years. By then it will be too late to turn back.

## A member in all but name

By Rupert Cornwell

BRITAIN may be standing aloof from the launch of the euro on 1 January next year. But it will not escape the consequences of potentially the most far-reaching step towards European unity since the Rome treaty setting up the original European Economic Community in 1957.

Though the Government says sterling will not be joining the single currency until the next Parliament – at the earliest not until 2002, and perhaps not before 2004 if the logic of this week's Treasury Select Committee is borne out – it will long since have become a *fait accompli* for business and finance, and perhaps for the ordinary consumer in the United Kingdom as well.

Behind the scenes, no one has worked harder than the Bank of England to help the City adapt to the new reality of a currency representing 11 countries that add up to what will be, barring the United States, the largest economy in the world. The consequences for the London foreign exchange market, the biggest in the world, will be profound.

Leading British companies meanwhile are starting to convert their accounts to the euro. Sainsbury, the supermarket chain, plans to accept euro coins and banknotes when they begin to circulate in 2002. By the backdoor, whatever decision the Government takes, the euro will gradually enter British lives.

Given the weight of public opinion against UK membership of the single currency – steady at some 60 per cent of the electorate despite the more pro-European rhetoric of the Government – Mr Blair had little choice but to adopt a wait-

and-see policy. But this may make the task of economic management even harder.

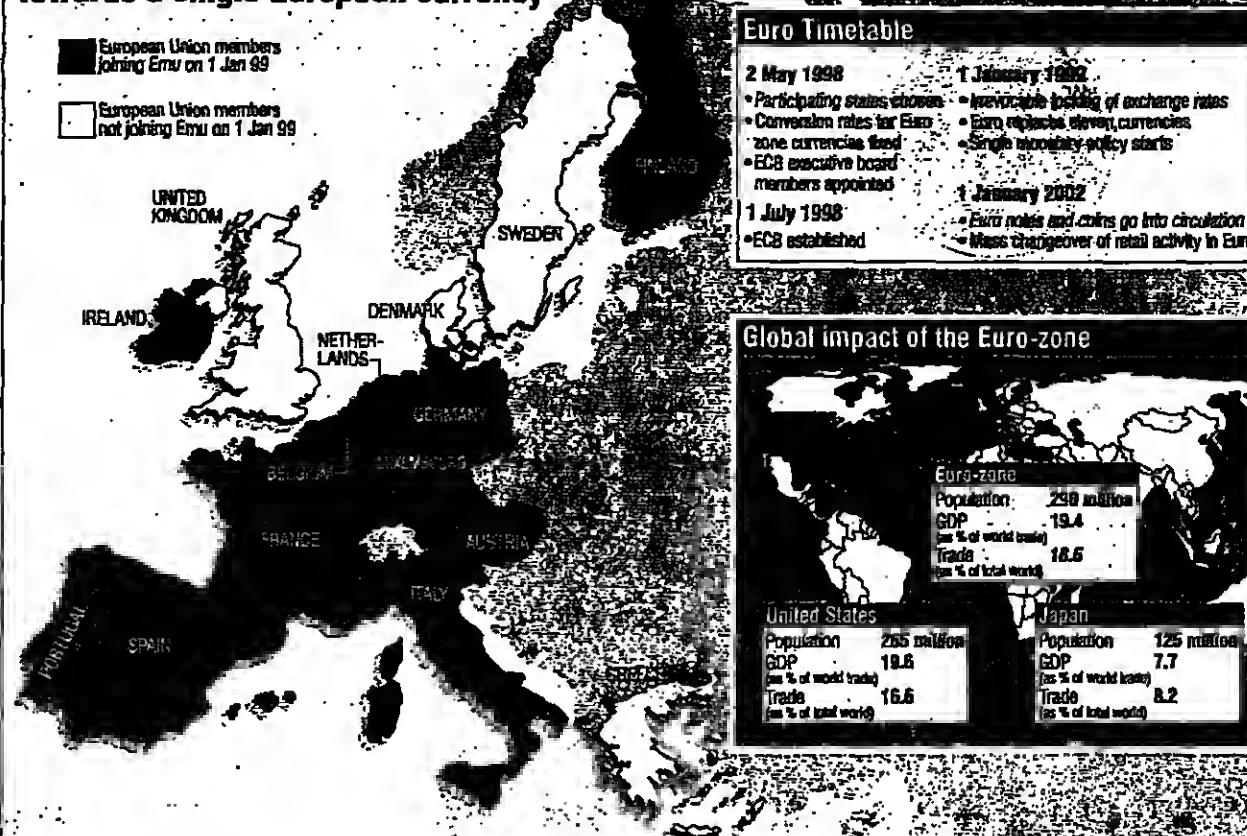
In policy terms, Britain is excluded from membership of Euro-X, the single currency club to be set up this month or next, which will meet informally on the margins of Ecofin, the regular sessions of EU finance ministers. In theory, Euro-X will confine itself to matters pertaining to the currency union. But its real influence will only emerge over time. Britain's fear is that in practice it could become the EU's main economic policymaking body, in which Britain's voice will be unheard. If so, then Mr Blair's promise to put Britain "at the heart of Europe" would have an even hollow ring.

Similarly, while it remains outside the single currency, Britain will have no board seat on the European Central Bank, guardian of the euro and bound to become the single most powerful organisation in the EU.

Most crucial of all will be the performance of the single currency. The Chancellor, the Bank of England and British industry will pray for a "hard" euro in which the markets have confidence and whose exchange rate would not further erode the competitiveness of sterling.

A weak euro could produce a flight of capital into the dollar, the Swiss franc and the pound. This would only make life more uncomfortable for British exporters.

## Towards a single European currency



## They're in – but can they stay the course?

By Diane Coyle  
Economics Editor

THIS weekend's summit will be a political event. Uncertainties about the economic success or failure of monetary union lie in the more distant future. After all the earlier fuss about which countries would clear the hurdles set by the Maastricht Treaty, it has been obvious for months that the single currency would start with 11 members, Greece the only wannabe that would not make the grade.

The official reports from the European Commission and European Monetary Institute, intended to pass judgement on which countries met the criteria set out in the Maastricht Treaty, turned out to be formalities. After heroic struggles, the would-be members hit most of the targets and little fudge was needed to sweeten the verdict.

In fact, only Italy and Belgium missed one criterion by a long way. Both have national debts relative to their GDP that are

about double the Maastricht ceiling. It could take decades for both countries to reduce their debt burdens to acceptable levels, but politically neither could have been excluded from Emu until 2030 or beyond.

Yet the fact that the first-wave members managed to clamber over the Maastricht hurdles has only concentrated attention on the long-term economic prospects – or dangers. One question is how long the participants can keep up the tough budget discipline imposed on them by the treaty. With high unemployment, a rapidly rising pensions burden and an array of spending cuts and tax increases introduced to meet the Emu deadline likely to be reversed, it is hard to believe the political will to keep government deficits below 3 per cent of GDP will prove strong.

The big members will find it hardest. For smaller countries like Spain and Ireland whose economies are booming, and will boom even more when they reduce their borrowing costs to German levels, there will

be little pain in fiscal discipline. For the wheezing German and French economies, more leanness and discipline is going to hurt. The Germans insist it is what they want anyway, and would favour a tougher stability pact – the post-launch budget corset, involving fines for profligate governments. The French do not, and the financial markets are poised for both political tension between the two Euro-behemoths and a surge in government spending.

An even more important long-term question mark hangs over how well the member economies will adjust to marching in lock-step with each other. The answer depends on whether they can replace the ability to adjust exchange rates and interest rates with other forms of flexibility. Many economists have their doubts about this, flexibility being a dirty word across much of the Continent. Productivity gains by European industries are one of the economic prizes offered by the single currency, but only the fittest member countries will win.

## Inflation dogs Celtic Tiger

By Katherine Butler

IRELAND, whose place as a founding member of the single currency will be confirmed tomorrow, will be the litmus test for Britain's decision on joining, many economists believe.

The dilemmas now faced by the Irish also provide a good example of how divergences in the economic make-up of the single currency zone could make the project deeply unpopular to implement.

Unlike Britain, Ireland has never been through the political convulsions on Europe which tore apart the Tories. A Euro-friendly electorate and a political consensus on monetary union led the government to decide some years ago that with or without the United Kingdom, the Republic's biggest trading partner, Ireland's place was on the inside.

Ireland meets all the qualifying criteria laid down by the Maastricht treaty thanks to sound management of the finances, industrial peace and a booming economy which is out of step with the Continent.

It is one of the few candidate countries to have achieved a budgetary surplus. Yet high growth and the creeping inflation which has come on the tail of the Celtic Tiger is already bringing Ireland into conflict with its Euro-zone partners.

Come January 1999 Ireland's interest rates will have to be cut to German levels. Yet this is the last thing Ireland needs when by the end of next year it will have the highest inflation in the EU after Greece.

The Irish authorities got the first taste of life post-euro last month when the government came under pressure to revalue the punt and was then ordered

to take immediate action to tackle inflation.

In practice this means that at a time when spiralling house prices are fuelling demands from teachers and nurses for wage increases and cuts to ease the burden of income tax, the government is being told to freeze spending and put tax cuts on hold in the interests of stability underpinning the euro.

Different economic structures, cultures and historical legacies are cause for immense concern throughout the euro area in light of the one-size-fits-all monetary policy about to be imposed.

How will vast swathes of the continent respond in the same way to the same economic medicine when such differences in things like pay, social security, demography, and labour market regulation persist?

For the Brussels planners, the answer is that a federal monetary policy will help to iron out the boom and bust cyclical movements while closer coordination on tax and spending will operate in parallel.

And we are seeing signs that the prospect of Emu is having an electro-shock effect on the most entrenched economic forcing governments and companies in France, Belgium and Germany to adopt the "Anglo-Saxon" style hire-and-fire labour model which Britain and Ireland have already embraced.

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**S**INCE The Independent was launched eleven years ago, pictures have been the key to our identity. We have always strived to have imaginative, innovative photographs and it is now one of our most famous hallmarks - and one which the newspaper industry has recognised three times this year alone. This week the paper picked up its latest prize - the Best Use of Photography award to The 1998 Newspaper Awards.

Open to all newspapers, national and regional, the entries were judged for content and reproduction. The panel of industry judges said: "The Independent's combination of outstanding photography and sensitivity and the imaginative use of photographs within the newspaper were unmatched. 'Highly visual events such as the Princess of Wales' funeral were powerfully expressed, with images a dominant contributor to the editorial coverage. The bold use of photography has characterised this title over the last year, and makes it a clear leader in the field."

David Swanborough, *The Independent's* picture editor, explains how he and his team of photographers stand out from the rest of the pack: "This latest commendation recognises that not only are our photographs outstanding, but the way in which they are used on the page gives them an unrivalled impact."

Take Nicola Kurtz's photograph of Red Indian John Black Feather on a trip to Loodoo. No other national newspaper would allow a picture, spreading across eight columns, to dominate the front page like that.

"The photograph was effectively the day's splash. We are saying that it is the most original and fresh thing in the paper. And as such, the best way to attract readers."

"Things have changed over the years, of course. Many people thought that a paper known for its use of black and white photography would not adapt to the introduction of colour. Clearly they have been proved wrong. At one stage we used a lot of menacing weather scenes, but we have moved on from that because keeping things fresh is a real priority."

"Our photographers tend to work away from the pack. They try to get a different take on the day's events by careful observation. The last thing I want to see is a snapshot, or the same picture everyone else has got."

"Photographers have to be flexible. It is not every day that we are going to get a royal wedding or a funeral. A dull event needs to be made into something special. Tom Pilston's picture of Michael Heseltine is one example of this. It completely sums up the scale of the Conservatives' defeat, while producing a really different, fresh image. This photograph has everything. It is humorous, imaginative and speaks volumes. It is also one of my personal favourites."

"We always allow our photographers to experiment with their pictures because photography is an art form. Instead of just producing a black and white image, for example, they will tint it for effect. We also like the unusual. John Voos' image of a masked woman at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival is a 'stand-alone' picture which tells a story in itself. It also makes you look twice. There is something strange, perhaps slightly unnerving about it."

"We have tremendous freedom to produce original photographs in *The Independent*. In the *Time Off* section on Saturdays we have an open brief to produce the images we want."

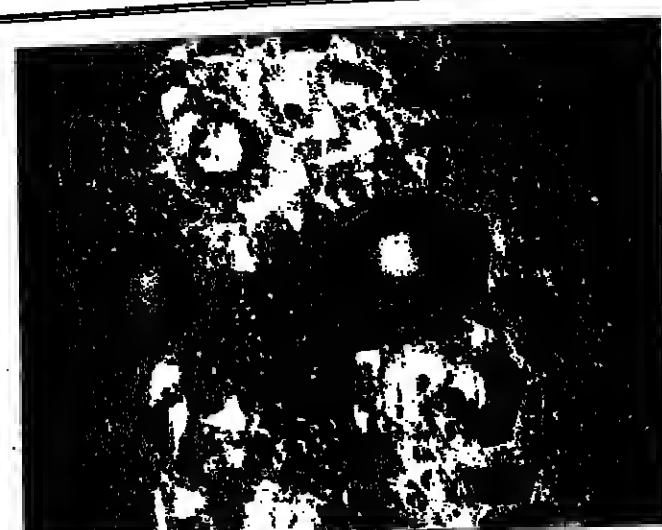
"And I suppose this is *The Independent's* secret. We use pictures to reflect stories, inform readers and entertain. And we have the freedom to use them properly. This selection of pictures, taken during the past year, represents the best of what we do."

A selection of photographs taken on Independent foreign assignments can be seen on the front of Saturday's *Time Off* section.

Nicole Veash



By Nicola Kurtz: John Black Feather, who came to London to retrieve the remains of his long-dead ancestor



By John Voos: A member of the Players' Company theatre group, rehearsing for a performance at the Edinburgh Fringe



By Andrew Buurman: Kensington Palace, 1 September 1997

## An Independent eye



By Tom Pilston: The Tory conference. Michael Heseltine's face says it all



By Brian Harris: One Man, training at dawn in Greystoke, Cumbria



By David Ashdown: England v Australia, Twickenham, November 1997

## Don't you know that it's different for boys?

Jack Straw wants to sort them out. A charity is also on their case. Little wonder, says Angela Neustatter

BOYS are failing at school, lagging behind girls with their degree passes and watching girls getting jobs over their heads. The only lead they have, we are told, is in crime and violence - so much so that this week the Home Secretary, Jack Straw, tagged them a "priority" case for urgent action.

So what are we to do with boys? We don't like their laddish behaviour, being a football fan of tantamount to becoming a tiger lout; if they flex their muscles rather than opening their hearts they are all drawn and no sensitivity. Then there

are critics who claim that they are turning into wimps, thanks to single mothers and a lack of father figures, not to mention the feminists who are raising boys to play with dolls not guns, and bringing up girls to play with trains. As one mother observed: "We pity women with two or three sons and celebrate heartily when a friend has a daughter."

So concerned is the charity Parent Network that next week it is holding a major conference, "Raising Boys", where Steve Biddulph, the Australian family therapist and best-selling author of child-rearing books,

will warn us that we must no longer assume that boys and girls are equals. It might be unpopular with feminist notions of child development, but Biddulph is categorical: boys are different to girls. Oh, and they are not difficult at all, if we can just remember this basic fact.

Biddulph will talk about the importance of a Dad as role model (or if there's not a Dad around, a male friend) who can have contests of strength, play-fight and test physical prowess on the sports ground, how they can help boys feel pride and pleasure in their strength while also learning the difference between that and aggression.

As a mother of two sons who, from the moment number one emerged into the world kicking, wriggling and seeming to flex diminutive muscles, have

been uproariously physical, noisy, energetic, testosterone-driving characters, I believe Biddulph is saying something important. My sons were born at a time when feminists - including me - were challenging everything to do with male culture and trying to bring up shining examples of emancipation.

One thing that was absolutely not acceptable was the boy child who took swaggering delight in his physical strength. But, like someone with a dirty secret, I silently delighted in this and still do as they leap and cavort across the sitting-room floor throwing themselves into karate positions, wrestling with their Dad, towering over me and flexing inflatable pectorals. They so obviously feel good about their big strong bodies and being admired for this

most primitive and fundamental maleness when it is shown off without harming anyone. That satisfied, they can also afford to let a soft side show.

A measure of the success of feminism's battle for equality

versity, in work and in self-esteem. Key to this was approval at home for the kind of young woman they were becoming.

Conversely, those who were not approved of did far less well. Which brings us back to boys,

It's time to give our sons the encouragement they need. Forget the New Man: Let's hear it for Real Boys

and feminists' determination to bring up girls to feel good about themselves came last year with Adrienne Katz's impressive work, "Can-Do-Girls", showing that they are doing even better at school and uni-

who now live in a climate that tells them just about everything they grew up believing boys should be is devalued or despised. Many see fathers out of work with badly punctured confidence, and the girls they

are growing up among are unimpressed by the things they have assumed they should be.

Vic Seidler, author of *Man Enough* (Sage), who has worked with men's groups for years, knows the feeling: "There is a feeling of cultural dislocation. As young men, we can no longer rely upon what our fathers taught us." While Angela Phillips, mother of a son, who explored boys' dilemma in *The Trouble With Boys* (Penguin) says: "Growing up male is hard - very hard."

It seems to me that we have been so busy concentrating on girls and their rights and needs, that we are failing boys and we need to get back to enjoying who and what they are that is different. Part of what is different is physical prowess - that has been true as long as homo sapien has strutted the planet.

Charlie Lewis, a Lancaster University lecturer who has worked extensively on boys' behaviour, wisely points out: "The boy who can feel his physical body is enjoyed is far more likely to be able to get close to women and to other men, and to want to do well in other ways than the boy who feels what he is at the most fundamental level is unacceptable. But the trouble is, we've come to fear what boys are."

Of course, building up boys in a constructive way isn't only about pride in their physicality. They need to feel valued in many ways, they need Dads who can show them how. Women have done their bit to help girls rush ahead. Now it's time to give our sons the encouragement they need. Forget the New Man: Let's hear it for Real Boys.











# THE INDEPENDENT

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## Sinn Fein will have to get real

IT IS time for the IRA to hand in its arms. We have said it before and we say it again. It has, of course, always been true and the IRA has never been likely to do it. But now it is more important than ever, and we are approaching the point when the IRA fantasy of the "armed struggle" has to collide with reality. Something has to give.

The Good Friday agreement made a republican case for disarmament: it offers the IRA its best chance of achieving its aim of getting British "troops out", as part of a process of multilateral disarmament by which it, at the same time, gives up its weapons. There is, of course, no moral equivalence between IRA terrorism and the British armed services, but there is a practical equation. If the IRA retains its weapons, the loyalist paramilitaries will keep theirs, and the British Army will stay. Violence will continue, and the republican cause will be further marginalised.

However, the IRA cannot be forced to hand over its Armaletes, mortars and Semtex, and shows no sign of even thinking about doing so. Its statement yesterday was categorical: "There will be no decommissioning by the IRA." In effect, it said that there would be no disarmament until the "end of British rule in Ireland", which might as well be "not ever". As John Hume, leader of the constitutional nationalists, has said, there is a "no surrender" mentality on both sides in Ulster. Mr Hume told this newspaper recently that he could not imagine the IRA ever handing its guns to the British government. He does think it is possible, though, that the issue could be handled by the international body set up to oversee decommissioning. But it is hard to be optimistic, and it is even harder to predict any movement before the election of the Northern Ireland assembly.

So, what then? The question of decommissioning was the greyest of the grey areas in the Good Friday agreement, but was a necessary gap which allowed the rest of the deal to be stuck together. At the last minute, at lunch time on Good Friday, the Unionists raised the issue of whether Sinn Fein leaders would be able to serve as ministers in the assembly while the IRA was fully armed. The Prime Minister jotted down a letter to David Trimble, the Ulster Unionist leader, promising to "support changes" to the agreement if its provisions for excluding people linked to terrorism turned out to be "ineffective", and the deal was struck.

The letter has been condemned colourfully by Ian Paisley's crew as being worth no more than Neville Chamberlain's piece of paper. Predictable propaganda, of course, but there is the beginning of a credibility problem here. What if Ireland, north and south, votes yes in the referendum in three weeks' time? What if Sinn Fein is elected to the assembly and Gerry Adams seeks to take the power-sharing executive? What then?

Well, if the IRA will not give up any weapons, Sinn Fein is going to have some explaining to do. So far, most of the pressure in this process has been on Mr Trimble and the Unionists, and it is infinitely to Mr Trimble's credit that he has stayed with it and reversed the traditional abstentionist stance of Unionism. Now the spotlight is going to swing back to the republicans.

No one believes Sinn Fein's protestation that it and the IRA are separate organisations. No one expects Gerry Adams to disassociate himself from the IRA. He has engaged in some extraordinary double-talk to embrace the ballot box without condemning the bullet, but the moment of truth is near. He ransacked the thesaurus to avoid "condemning" the IRA murders which had him suspended from the peace talks earlier this year. He "regretted" them, as he regretted all killings, and, more significantly, called them "wrong". But if he wants to serve as a minister in the assembly, he will have to affirm his commitment to non-violence, and promise to "use any influence [he] may have to achieve the decommissioning of all paramilitary arms within two years".

That is what it says in the Good Friday agreement which Sinn Fein has not exactly signed up to, but gone along with. Mr Blair has, rightly, appeared republican sentiment, as part of a strategy of kicking away, one by one, the moral crutches which support armed republicanism. But now he has to lean on Mr Adams to repudiate the use or threat of force for political ends in more explicit terms. Sinn Fein must take the first step towards achieving the "demilitarisation" it claims to seek.

## Brew Labour's millennium beer tent

MY GOODNESS! Just in case all you Brew XI drinkers, Ruddlers and Tetley hithermen out there were worrying, we can now confirm that you will indeed be able to get a drink at the Millennium Dome. What's more, you'll be offered a wide range of real ales. This is extremely refreshing news, and, we suspect, will work wonders for the popularity of the Dome project.

It has long been the chant of his hithermen critics that Peter "it's my round" Mandelson, the minister responsible for the project, couldn't organise a piss-up in a brewery. Well, he is the last person to be found crying into his beer and he has boldly decided to restore a bit of London pride. The "inn at the Dome" will be a showcase for British brewing and will feature a new ale, called Mandy's Revenge. Don't drink too much of this, though, or you will soon find the room, and perhaps much else, spinning around you. Mind you, it might be that bit easier to find tranquillity in the Dreamscape exhibition or use the Body Zone in order, as the organisers say, to "explore the dramatic impact of lifestyle choices on the way our bodies behave and perform".

All in all it is a shrewd move by the Minister Without Portfolio But With A Drink In His Hand. He has an opportunity to show how "Brew Labour" can refresh the parts of the body politic that other parties cannot reach. Traditionally the brewers have been the allies of the Conservative Party. Mr Mandelson might be tempting them into New Labour's "big tent" through the organisation of this grandiose beer tent. In any case we will soon be enjoying probably the best booze-up in the world.



### Mary Bell

HOWEVER dark the detail of Mary Bell's crimes and childhood, however repugnant the issue of payment, the plain fact is that we urgently must come to understand the intergenerational transmission of abuse and brutality which has created the culture of violence in which we presently live. The extremes are most often the ground on which we learn.

Other less publicised sadistic abuse cases are thrown out of courts as improbable, because the general public, including lawyers, juries and doctors, read newspapers and see no detail of the blacker depravities of human behaviour. It is a journalistic duty, however unpleasant, to lay these open to scrutiny and investigation without prurience. Satiation and revulsion are inevitable but we need to focus if there is any hope of finding even partial long-term solutions.

MARJORIE ORR  
Director  
Accuracy about Abuse  
London NW3

I WOULD not attempt to justify Mary Bell's crimes, but I do not believe that it is reasonable to put her fee on a par with a criminal who enjoys the proceeds of crime.

Mary was not paid for committing the crimes. She was paid for agreeing - long after she had completed her sentence - to discuss the circumstances in which the crimes were committed. That is quite different from allowing a drug dealer, a professional robber, or a professional murderer, to enjoy the proceeds of his or her crime. I fail to see how Mary's fee could provide an incentive for other potential child murderers.

RITA HALE  
London N1

AS YOU comment in your leading article (30 April), cycles of childhood abuse and cruelty are repeated endlessly. If Mary Bell has succeeded thus far in providing her 14-year-old daughter with loving care, is this not a matter of some hope? And doesn't she and those who over the years have tried to help her deserve some credit?

JOHN MITCHELL  
London SE13

SO THE tabloids have found Mary Bell and forced her and her child to flee. Will any of the reporters or editors of these papers be prosecuted for child abuse? Naturally not. Will any proceeds of this story go to charity? What a foolish idea. What has happened with all the promises to protect privacy? Ignored when they are in the way of a good story. And these are the same people who are always pretending to support moral values, the responsible adults who attack a woman for a crime she committed as a child 30 years ago.

HERBERT SOTTUNG  
Friedrichsdorf, Germany

I ONCE knew Mary Bell's address and was approached by scores of journalists each arguing that if she gave her story it would be a unique opportunity to let everyone know she was now a different person, trying to lead a normal life. I found the only escape was to deny all knowledge of her.

The newspapers gleefully ripping her apart for accepting a few thousand pounds are the ones which would have offered ten times as much for an exclusive. What cynical swines newshounds can be (I was a journalist myself).

KEN NORMAN  
Bowness-on-Solway, Cumbria

IT WOULD appear, in the wake of the comments by the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary on the Mary Bell affair, that the people's princess was pursued by the people's lynch mob.

MARK TREGLOWN  
Bristol

### Join the euro club

FOR A moment when I read John Redwood's article "When the tilling ringer" (27 April) I thought he must be visiting from another planet.

Most interesting from a former DTI minister is the idea that wicked foreign companies "may decide that this is the time to force the British sup-

plier to take the currency risk". In fact, British companies have hid and paid in German marks, French francs, US dollars etc for decades, in order to remain competitive. And for just as long, a forward foreign exchange contract has helped them to hedge the risk. It's not a euro issue - it's a daily business.

But wait - surely the best way to avoid this problem of exchange risks is to join the single currency. Then everyone can avoid paying exchange rate premiums to those nasty foreign exchange dealers.

Mr Redwood's obsession robs him of the vision which other nations such as the Austrians have. They are already dual-pricing in euro, and quoting euro equivalents in their daily papers - even on the stock market pages - to prepare their people nine months before the currency is even introduced. They will use the change to accelerate the gradual move away from the 19th-century medium of notes and coin, with its risk of forgery and convenient untraceability, and towards electronic payment by debit card and the electronic purse.

Oh, for politicians who can see the potential of an inevitable idea rather than fighting to preserve a better yesterday!

PAUL G. RATCLIFFE  
Tunbridge Wells, Kent

ONE UNDERSTANDS that it is one of the roles of a serious journalist to provoke thought, to suggest the implausible and to question accepted wisdom. However, Hamish McRae (Comment, 22 April), surely had his tongue firmly in his cheek in suggesting that Britain would be as well off economically in the North American Free Trade Area (Nafta) it would be as a full member of the euro club.

It is true that historically the UK has invested heavily in North America. But in future the opportunities for investment in Europe, where corporate rationalisation and consolidation has a long way to go before reaching the mature state of the US economy, will be far greater. These investment opportunities will be

greatly enhanced by economic and monetary union. They would not be duplicated on the same scale by membership of Nafta if the UK remained a sterling island in a large US dollar bloc.

Equally, I would suggest, the cultural affinity between Britain and the rest of Europe, based on shared historic moral and social values, is stronger than our identity with the laissez-faire doctrines of the US.

Plan A should be to declare our firm intention to join EMU as soon as possible, preferably before the next general election. This would ease pressure on the pound. It is, of course, a good idea to have a plan B up one's sleeve; it should be to commit the UK to joining EMU as soon as economically possible after 2002.

Any other solution would relegate the UK to a very minor role in world affairs. It is a kind suggestion of Mr Gingrich, but I suspect that once we were inside Nafta the Americans would eat us for breakfast.

NEIL MONTGOMERY  
Woodbridge, Suffolk

### Arms catalogue

IN HER piece on the Oxfam report about arms sales (23 April) Fran Abrams refers to a catalogue from the Defence Export Services Organisation which lists eight UK companies involved in the manufacture and supply of small arms and ammunition, and compares this with a list of 120 companies identified by Oxfam.

I should clarify that this apparent disparity is because the catalogue in question, a commercial publication produced in collaboration with the Ministry of Defence, is designed to publicise British companies and products. It is not intended as a comprehensive list. It is entirely up to companies themselves as to whether they wish to be included.

OONA MUIRHEAD  
Director of Information Strategy and News  
Ministry of Defence

### BSE mystery

THE DEATH of Clare Tomkins from CJD is very sad and very puzzling ("Vegetarian dies after battle against CJD", 23 April). Clare is not the first vegetarian to have contracted this disease allegedly caught by eating beef. We may be harking up the wrong tree.

More and more evidence indicates that BSE may not be caused by cattle feed but by exposure to organophosphate pesticides which attack the nervous system and are widely used in farming and horticulture. Large doses were compulsorily used on cattle to kill warble flies.

It has not been scientifically proved that BSE can be transmitted to people by eating beef. This speculation has grown because the symptoms of CJD victims are similar to those in BSE-affected cattle. There is evidence to suggest that CJD victims may have been directly exposed to these pesticides through their work and have been particularly susceptible to their harmful effects. Clare Tomkins worked with animals which may well have been treated to kill parasites. For example, flea sprays and flea collars are impregnated with organophosphates.

This evidence, which has not been thoroughly investigated so far, may throw new light on the BSE crisis.

TERESA GORMAN MP  
(Billerica, C)

House of Commons

### Top to bottom

AS I WAS taught at Cambridge in 1935 by a former Survey of India geodesist, the real problem about the height of Mount Everest (Stephen Goodwin's Everest Diary, 30 April) is not defining the top (which the Chinese did with their metal tripod) but the bottom, five hundred miles from the nearest sea.

JOHN WRIGHT  
West Wittering, West Sussex

### Bite on exports

TWO depressing items on 30 April. British companies not interested in a new British breakthrough in dental care. And a huge deficit on our manufactured goods. When will we learn?

ROBERT DAVIES  
London SE3



MILES KINGSTON

Doctor, doctor,  
Spin me a line.  
If I'm ill,  
Tell me I'm fine.  
Say the same thing  
If I'm dyin'.  
Doctor, doctor,  
Spin me a line.

JUST ONE of the many modern playground rhymes which seem to be based on modern political reality, as I have found out in my rhyme-collecting in schools round the country. Some of the Labour spin-doctors are even mentioned by name in the odd verse, as in this one:—  
Dr Campbell went for a ramble  
In a shower of rain.  
He shouted and raved  
Till the weather behaved

And it never rained again.

It seems extraordinary that Alastair Campbell's legendary rudeness should have percolated through to school children, though it seems to show that education gets through somehow. Indeed, children have their own views on education, as this skipping rhyme demonstrates:—  
Homework at morning  
Homework at night.  
All this homework  
Can't be right.  
Try this homework  
On David Blunkett.  
If HE can't do it  
We'll just junk it.

I mentioned yesterday a short rhyme about London's new mayor, which

prompted one reader to send me this, heard at her local school:—  
Oh, who will be boss of London town?  
Who will be mayor when the chips are down?  
"I," said Ken, "I am the man.  
I can rule London if anyone can.  
For I was head of the GLC  
And everyone remembers me!"  
"I," said Jeff, "So please give me  
My last chance to make history!  
For I was head of the Tory party  
And I am rich, and my wife is arty..."  
But when Ken and Jeff had had their say  
Everybody looked the other way.  
All on the left avoided Ken's eye.  
All on the right whispered, "Why Jeff? WHY?"

It's nice to see a bit of narrative element in modern playground rhymes, and there's an element of story in the next one

too, which seems to be about Tiny Rowland and Mohammed Al Fayed.  
Tiny Row had a safe deposit box  
In Harrods, where gentlemen buy their socks.  
And in this box his secrets lay  
And what they were, no one could say  
But Harrods belonged to Big Fat Mo  
Who (allegedly) longed to know  
What Tiny Row had locked away.  
And so I'm rather afraid to say  
That Big Fat Mo, allegedly,  
Got an X-ray scanner to see  
(This, we stress, is sub judice.  
And belongs to the realm of theory)  
Through the walls and right inside  
To see what Tiny had got in hide.  
All he saw was a billet doux  
Saying, "I'm British, unlike you!"  
This made Mo as mad as hell,  
Saying, "I'll soon be British as well!"

"No," said Tony, "No," said the Queen,  
"Being Egyptian's more your scene."

Room for just two more short ones.  
Dr Jack banned beef on the bone  
Because of a risk  
Of a million to one.  
Will Dr Jack come smiling through?  
No, not by a chance  
Of a million to two.

John had a euro,  
Shiny new euro,  
John had a euro in his hat.  
John went shopping  
And paid with his euro;  
Said the shopman to Johnny:  
"Ere, what's THAT?"

More one day soon, I hope.



## Beware the press when money and arrogance are on the loose



ANDREW MARR

### ON MARY BELL AND THE BRITISH PRESS

THIS is not another article about Mary Bell. It is about the rest of us, and in particular the press. We are supposed to be living in a gentler, calmer country - "Cool Britannia" - a nation blandly at ease with itself, basking in the semi-perpetual smile of its young leader. The old cruelties and savagery are behind us; life may be duller than in the Eighties, but it is nicer.

Now comes the Hunt for Mary, a savage and pointless episode which disgraces tabloid journalism and makes hypocrites of broadsheet people too. Let us review its successes so far.

Success one: on Wednesday night, a 14-year-old girl's life was suddenly turned upside down when she learned her mother had killed two boys at the age of eleven. She discovered this traumatic fact not gently or at a time of her mother's choosing, but because her house was surrounded by journalists in the middle of the night. Now that girl is stuck in police custody with no idea of what will happen next. This is a great thing to happen in a civilised and caring country, isn't it?

Success two: the families of Mary Bell's victims, who have by all accounts been living damaged lives ever since the 1968 murders, have had their privacy and fragile peace smashed apart. There is a Richardson grandson who didn't know he had an uncle, killed at the age of four, until a couple of weeks ago. Why is their pain stirred up? Because Gitta Sereny, *The Times* and then other papers decided the motives of the killer were so interesting that the victims' families' feelings must come second.

Success three: some newspapers have been sold on the back of this. Not very many, though. The tabloids were estimating no significant effect on their sale during the first couple of days of the story, though that could change now, while of the broadsheets, only *The Times* itself has seen any real rise. Even then, we are probably talking about 14-20,000 per day, or around 2-3 per cent, over the first couple of days, which is small beer by its standards. Perhaps this is one of those "sensational" stories editors think sell papers, but which leave most normal people cold.

This newspaper has reported the story, and that's our job; but we are bitterly unhappy that the story is running at all. It might have been all right had the original *Times* book deal stopped there; but the payment of Mary Bell has given worse papers their excuse to dig her out.

Particularly disgraceful was *The Sun*, which gave a fistful of clues to the Bell family's whereabouts. The paper then published a letter from the two victims' families to Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, which concluded that Bell "should be found, named and shamed into paying back this money". I'm all for shamed, though she has been already, and for her paying her money to charity. But why "found"? What is the point of "found" unless to mob her, or worse?

The payment question is real, of course.

There is something distasteful in the paying of criminals for their stories, however harrowing they find the business of retelling the past. Was it worth paying this person? In my view, no. I think Gitta Sereny is guilty of overstating the importance of her book and what it reveals.

And her explanation why she paid Bell is at best grossly naive. Sereny said, in a letter to the victims' families that "If I hadn't done so, I would have made myself guilty of doing to her virtually since she was born: to use her." Yet Bell, and more importantly, Bell's daughter is being used. Sereny was, literally, the author behind a chain of completely predictable events - serialisation, outrage, pursuit - which have probably destroyed that damaged family's last hopes of happiness or normality. What do a few thousand quid mean compared to that?

Bizarrely, though, the Government's reaction to this story has missed the point entirely. Instead of focussing on the way in which a media hunt was spreading the damage in the Bell family to yet another generation, and stirring up the victims' families' memories, the Prime Minister attacked the financial deal. "I cannot instinctively feel it is right that someone should make money out of crimes that are absolutely appalling," said Tony Blair.

It's a perfectly reasonable view - unchallengeable, even - though it applies just as much to many other crime exploitation wheezes that go unchallenged, such as the use of Mad Frankie Frazer to advertise a disgusting sugary drink.

In fact, to focus on the original Mary Bell crimes and Sereny's decision to pay her, rather than the hounding of the family now, Blair was taking the easy option. He was confirming the tabloid agenda rather than challenging it. Jack Straw, another thoroughly decent man, might, as Home Secretary, have said something about the media frenzy, particularly since his own family have endured something similar. Instead he shored up the *Sun*'s self-righteous populism by replying to the parents in an open letter.

What should Mr Blair have done? He might have questioned the decision to serialise the book in the first place, thus creating the media frenzy that ensued. If he'd taken a bigger canvas, he should, and could, have suggested that we must eschew language about "monsters" and realise that abuse creates abuse, cruelty provokes cruelty. To understand is not always to forgive, but it gives hope. That would have been an act of genuinely Christian leadership.

But even if all that's asking too much, the Prime Minister certainly should have attacked papers like *The Sun* for coming close to breaking the law in homing in on the Bell home. But that, of course, would have been an anti-Murdoch act. This was all, it seems, a little too courageous for New Labour. Better go for the elderly author with the funny accent and the anonymous killer, the monster. The requirements of tabloid populism are seemingly so engrained that they cannot be evaded, even by a government as popular as this one.

There are no heroes in this story. Crass exploitation of human misery is our real theme, whether it masquerades as high-minded social analysis or indulges in the language of the lynch mob. Editors followed the scent of money, and acted as right humbuggers the while. Politicians followed their new masters in the press, instead of stopping and thinking and giving a real lead. The author, Gitta Sereny, doesn't seem to have written a book so extraordinary that all this misery is justified; yet her common-sense attitude to why evil happens is still infinitely preferable to the rantings about monsters and revenge.

In the end money and arrogance have merely made a few sad lives a little bit worse. Happy, everyone?

## First years don't prove a thing - look to Labour history ...



BEN PIMLOTT

### THE OMENS FOR BLAIR

CONSENSUSES are funny. When one is really raging, it is hard for anybody to stand outside it without appearing ridiculous. At present, such a consensus exists about the Blair government. Observers acknowledge Tony Blair's exceptional luck, but they are virtually unanimous in their appreciation of his political skills. One year after taking office, practically everybody has become New Labour - even Margaret Thatcher. William Hague seems the most New Labour of the lot.

The admiration is probably justified. If the Government has been lucky - suicidal Tory party, buoyant economy, US president desperately in need of a friend, and so on - well, in politics, you make your own luck, and Blair has exploited his own good fortune with exquisite adroitness. The reward has been a worldwide popularity unmatched for a British politician since the days of Churchill. It is extraordinary, and heartening, to see the way tables are turned. Other countries (Germany, Japan), with their economies in the doldrums, wonder what the secret is, and want a Blair too.

Yet trouble-free episodes in British politics have been so rare and brief that it is hard not to find something eerie about the present milpound. If the Prime Minister has ordered his courtiers to keep anniversary celebrations *sous le voile*, his caution may well be prudent, as in so many other things.

New Labour, new era, new trajectory? Possibly. But if so, the break with precedents will have to be emphatic. For the truth is that Labour honeymoons have always ended in tears.

The earliest comparison is with Ramsay MacDonald, Labour's first-ever premier, who took office in January 1924, and was the only premier to have had no prior government experience.

MacDonald was physically imposing, prone to morally uplifting rhetoric, good at diplomacy, a commanding figure in his party, dismissive of the Left, and good with the upper classes, and Scottish. Like Blair, he strove to turn Parliament into a grand



Clement Attlee's 1945 victory led to a miraculous year, followed by an 'annus horrenundus'

Photograph: MSI

council of state rather than a confrontational arena, and quickly disposed of media worries about Labour's fitness to govern. His first few months were a great relief to Buckingham Palace, which harboured a suspicion that a Labour government might lead to a Bolshevik revolution.

However, the analogy ends there. Labour's minority status made the Government dependent on the Liberals, who quickly pulled the rug out, forcing an autumn election. Thus, the first Labour administration had no complete first year. The second MacDonald administration (May 1929 to August 1931) had to cope from the outset with the fallout from the Wall Street stock-market crash. Unemployment soared, and the government's anniversary was marked by the resignation of Sir Oswald Mosley - the first of a series of splits that culminated in the government's demise the following summer.

A different comparison is provided by the 1945 administration. Like Blair's government, the Attlee one had a large House of Commons majority, and faced a cowed and ineffective opposition. Like New Labour, it was even more popular one year in than it had been at the time of its election.

Labour in 1945 was certainly radical. Gordon Brown's initial act as Chancellor was, symbolically, to cut the Bank of England loose: in 1945, Chancellor Hugh Dalton's first move, equally symbolical, was to take the Bank into public ownership. That was only the beginning. Soon afterwards, coal, civil aviation, electricity and the railways were taken off Herbert Morrison's nationalisation shopping list, while steps began to set up

a health service and welfare state.

Dalton called 1946 "annus mirabilis", a phrase Blairites might apply to 1998. Unfortunately, a miraculous first 12 or 18 months was followed by "annus horrenundus" in 1947 - involving a fuel shortage and financial crisis that curtailed the Labour programme, came close to toppling the prime minister, and marked a turning-of-the-tide for a government that had hitherto seemed set for ten years in office.

The Attlee administration was not the last Labour one to fall from grace, after an initial success. Much the same happened to the government of Harold Wilson in the 1960s.

### The truth is that Labour honeymoons have always ended in tears

Again, there are some parallels with New Labour. Like Blair, Wilson was a young and energetic politician who took over the party leadership when a predecessor died unexpectedly. Like Blair, Wilson led a largely untied team in cabinet.

Seldom has British parliamentary politics witnessed such deftness as shown by Wilson in his first year: as he turned a tiny majority to his own advantage, making party unity the watchword. Internationally, Wilson was congratulated for his statesmanlike handling of the problem of Southern Rhodesia, which was threatening UDI: domestically, there was excitement over the unveiling, in September 1965, of the National Plan by George Brown, the

John Prescott-figure of the day.

The new premier was idolised by the press, and his popularity in the country was so great, compared with that of his Conservative opposite number, that the Tories adopted a new method of selecting a leader.

Twelve months after taking office, the headlines buzzed with announcements of pledges fulfilled. During the autumn and winter months of 1965-6, Labour led in the polls, and in the March 1966 general election, Wilson increased his parliamentary majority, while Labour continued to present itself as a band of busy, able and efficient ministers who believed in the modernising message they brought to the nation.

non-existent majorities and stunted by recurrent crises.

However, governments do not always slide remorselessly downward, and there is also one other fairly recent - non-Labour - comparison, to bear this out. One year after winning in 1979, Margaret Thatcher trailed in the polls, as manufacturing industry collapsed and unemployment rose. By the end of 1981, Gallup gave the Conservatives a mere 23 per cent of the vote, their worst showing ever. Then came the Falklands conflict, the premier's metamorphosis into the Iron Lady, and the Tories' legendary win in the 1993 election.

Is it better for a government to do well or badly in its first year? Every premier would opt for doing well, and Blair could scarcely have done better. Yet every premier also knows that getting through year one is not the end of the story.

History cannot tell us what the future holds for the present prime minister: whether a crippling collapse, or an enhancing triumph. However, what the past does suggest is that any judgement on the present government is premature, and that the real test - a make-or-break financial crisis, a foreign war or whatever - that will decide Blair's place in history, is yet to happen.

Ben Pimlott is author of biographies of Hugh Dalton, Harold Wilson and the Queen, and is Warden-elect of Goldsmiths College, London.

## Blair's commitment to both old and new supporters



DONALD MACINTYRE  
WATCHING THE PRIME MINISTER

THIS time last year, West End theatregoers were flocking to see *Tom and Clem*, a serendipitously timed play set in the immediate aftermath of the 1945 election. At its most resonant moment, Attlee stops worrying about how to make people realise his victory won't bring "Jerusalem overnight" long enough to express surprise that the distinctly ruling class young official looking after him at Potsdam had voted Labour. "Quite a lot of us did," she says in crisp, Southern Received English tones, "that's why you won."

The exchange expresses why Blair reminds those who marvel, or alternatively fret, at his appeal to so-called middle England, that all successful gov-

ernments, including Margaret Thatcher's, have been built on popular cross-class coalitions of the same sort. The difference, it no longer needs saying now that Blair has said it so often, is that the Labour ones all lasted for only one term. This doesn't look like a government which will last for only one term. You can't find a politician in any party who works on any assumption other than that Blair will win the next election. Except one. Blair makes no assumptions. He is telling colleagues that Labour will take some punishment in the local elections next Thursday. He is unimpressed by the polls, realising that what goes up must come down. He knows only that maintenance of that coalition is the necessary condition of his government's passage into terms two and perhaps three or four. Blow it, and you blow your best chances to change history.

This accounts for Blair's impatience with many of the complaints made about his administration so far. He has been known to remark that some people in his party feel that a Labour government is only fulfilling its sacred mission if it is in crisis, heading for defeat. He doesn't believe that a government introducing a minimum wage, union recognition rights, an objectively redistributive budget, a New Deal for the unemployed funded by a

raid on the utilities, has exactly trashed its core constituency. Or that one that has surgically removed the middle class perk of free university tuition is too timid to confront vested interests. Or that one which has developed more power, monetary and political, than anyone expected, is too authoritarian. But he believes that those who think he should have moved even faster fundamentally misunderstand that in the long term fiscal prudence and popularity deliver as imprudence and unpopularity - emblems branded on past Labour governments - never can. Yes, social exclusion unit notwithstanding, sink estates are still sink estates; but how long did it take Margaret Thatcher to deliver her big achievements - union reform, privatisation, the big bang? By the end of the first term, let alone the first year, she had hardly started.

On Europe, I suspect, Blair does reluctantly accept that his unique opportunity to lead in the formation of a flexible, deregulated, open Europe in the post-Mitterrand, and soon-to-be, perhaps, post-Kohl era will for the foreseeable future be circumscribed by Britain's self-exclusion from the euro to be finally born in Brussels this weekend. As it happens Blair's skills, triumphantly displayed in Northern Ireland, in circum-

stances in which he genuinely thought more than once a settlement was lost, are still in demand. In The Hague, Paris and Bonn, to help settle the wrangle over who should run the European bank. But this is in the end Franco-German business and that cannot fail to frustrate a prime minister who now has a much clearer vision of Britain's role in the world than when he came to office a year ago: not superpower but pivot.

But here again the same laws apply. Blair is unfazed by

### He will continue to reach beyond party to the whole country

allegations of timidity towards EMU. First there is the little question of whether it does indeed succeed. Second, he is almost haunted by his observations of how Britain's entry into the ERM, timed to suit political rather than economic pressures, courted disaster. Until there is a credible economic case - and at present with interest rates at their current level and with Britain having no need of its fiscal

disciplines there is none - then the political opposition can't reliably be vanquished in a referendum. According to his closest allies, it is that rather than fear of Rupert Murdoch which restrains him. What is true is that Blair won't risk his sustaining popular coalition by entry before the economics are right.

All that said, it has been an extraordinary, Britain-changing year - the highly avoidable messes over EMU, Bernie Ecclestone's funding of the party, and lone parent benefit cuts notwithstanding. There will be a reshuffle - perhaps at Whitson - of a cabinet in which Brown, Prescott, Straw, Blunkett, Mowlem, Cook (at least when at his desk or in EU negotiations) and Frank Dobson have started. There will be a change in the Cabinet Office structure, if not quite, as one high official recently put it, to give Blair a more "Napoleonic" grip on government, at least to give Number Ten some of the capacity to co-ordinate departmental activity every senior Downing Street adviser in living memory has complained it woefully lacks. But above all Blair will continue to govern as he has done, reaching beyond party to the country as a whole.

Which means, I think, more surprises like the lateral thinking that last week put Chris Patten in charge of the RUC

review. Just when you thought you had caught up with the new politics Blair pushes the boundaries out a little further. (It can't be repeated too often that the question of electoral reform is for him one of means and not ends: the best way of sustaining the centre and centre left coalition of interests - the big tent - which brought Blair to power and which can keep the Tories out for a generation.) He talks with hitherto unfashionable ease about national purpose. His admiration of Thatcher's drive as a national leader isn't feigned. Nor is his admiration for businessmen, however uneasy it makes some in the Labour Party. This isn't some aberration of style: for Blair, enterprise is where growth and jobs come from.

This doesn't mean forgetting about the poor. What it does mean is that Labour's newest supporters have as much claim not to be betrayed as those who have never voted other than for the Labour Party. It's a safe bet that Blair told Roy Hattersley, his most articulate critic on Labour's old Croslandite wing, when he met him last week that the alternative to a New Labour government isn't old Labour but Conservative. And that it does no service to the long term interests of those who most need a Labour government to will the victory but then forget how it was won.

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Internal e-mail reveals that Seagram fired opening salvo in the bidding war

## EMI goes under the hammer

By Nigel Cope  
Associate City Editor

A BIDDING WAR for EMI was in prospect yesterday after the British music group received an offer from Seagram, the Canadian drinks and entertainment group, that could lead to a bid. Seagram, which controls the Universal/MCA film and music empire, has tabled an offer of 580p a share, valuing EMI at £4.8bn.

EMI shares soared nearly 20 per cent to 706.7p on the news as analysts looked forward to a possible auction for the last independent major music group. Other potential bidders could include American groups Disney, Viacom and Dreamworks, Bertelsmann of Germany, Sony of Japan and Kirk Kerkorian, the American buy-out specialist who once made an aborted offer for Chrysler the American car giant. Mr Kerkorian has expressed an interest in EMI but it is understood that he has not yet made an offer.

EMI did not disclose the identity of the suitor in its statement to the stock exchange only saying that it had received an offer that could lead to a bid. However internal e-mails sent to EMI staff included more detail. One said: "As you may now be aware, EMI has received an approach about a possible offer for the company from Seagram - owner of Universal. It is in no way clear that the purchase will go through. As we receive more information we will keep you informed."

A memo sent later said simply: "Seagram 580p bid. Advise to hold on as more suitors are coming to the ball."

On the possibility of a bid battle one analyst said: "EMI has rarely value and it is a trophy asset. People go all starry-eyed when it comes to music and film companies."

Anthony de Larrinaga, media analyst at Panmure Gordon added: "The fit would certainly be best with Seagram. EMI is strong in emerging markets and Europe. Seagram is strong in America where EMI is weak."

Analysts see Seagram as the bidder

SEAGRAM may be eyeing up an acquisition of EMI but the possibility of the Canadian giant teaming up with another British group appears to be receding, writes Andrew Yates. Hopes of a spirits merger between Allied Domecq and Seagram are fading according to industry sources. The two sides have been talking about a deal for several months but have failed to thrash out an agreement. Allied Domecq admitted that it had so far been unable to broker a merger with any rival drinks firms.

most that could derive the best synergies from a deal with EMI. In addition to its drinks division which controls brands like Chivas Regal and Glenlivet, Seagram also owns Universal, the former MCA business whose roster of acts includes Counting Crows and Mary J Blige. It would be able to wring out cost benefits from combining its distribution arms whilst improving its geographic spread.

Some analysts said a bid battle could force the take-out price as high as 750p. However others said some US rivals might not cherish the prospect of a battle with Seagram. It is understood that Ed Eisner, chief executive officer of the Walt Disney Corporation, ruled out a bid for EMI at a briefing in Florida only a few weeks ago.

The other major music groups such as Sony and Bertelsmann might face competition problems if they were to bid. Viacom, the MTV and Paramount media empire has heavy debts and is looking to make disposals including the Simon & Schuster book publishing division and Blockbuster Video.

There has been speculation about a possible bid for EMI since Sir Colin Southgate, the group's chairman flew to the United States last week. Some music industry sources even said he had made the flight in the private jet of Ed Bronfman, Seagram's chief executive officer.

Sir Colin is back in London this week as is Mr Bronfman who has been visiting



What they want: Radiohead, one of the big names that have made EMI an attractive target for overseas predators

Seagram's UK operations. He gave a presentation to staff at its London office at The Ark in Hammersmith on Tuesday but is expected to return to Canada by the weekend.

EMI's investors have been bruised by the under-performance of the company which de-merged from the Thorn rentals business in August 1996. It has been hit by the slowdown in global CD sales and the impact of the Asian crisis and full year profits next month are expected to be down from £380m to £312m.

One senior fund manager at one of EMI's largest institutional shareholders said: "EMI is a deal waiting to happen. I think the ground has been well prepared for this with the various management changes over the last couple of months."

It means the deal would be less likely to founder on the personality clashes which have affected other deals (such as the failed Glaxo-SmithKline merger).

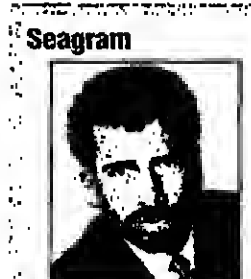
EMI's management has been in a state of turmoil since plans for an orderly handover of control from Sir Colin Southgate collapsed into disarray. Sir Colin had been keen to spend less time at EMI following his appointment as chairman of the Royal Opera House. But the promotion of Jim Ffield, the head of EMI Music to the chief executive position was blocked by the non-executives. Mr Ffield, known as "Lucky Jim" because of his high pay then left with a pay-off of £12m.

EMI Group traces its roots back over a century to the birth of recorded music

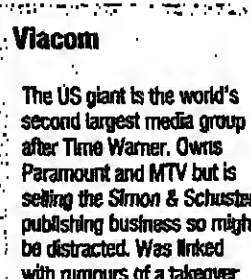
and has produced a host of famous artists stretching from Dame Nellie Melba to the Spice Girls. Its current roster includes Garth Brooks and Tina Turner plus classical artists Roberto Alagna and Vanessa-Mae. EMI also continues to cash in on the recordings of the Beatles who they first rejected but then signed in 1962.

EMI has its origins in The Gramophone Company, set up in London in 1897 by William Barry Owen, as associate of Emile Berliner, the inventor of the gramophone. Two years later the company bought Francis Barraud's now famous painting of black and white fox terrier Nipper listening to the horn of a gramophone. The "His Master's Voice" image and title became the company's trademark.

### Who might bid for EMI and why



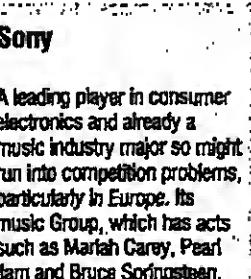
**Seagram**  
Edgar Bronfman Jr, CEO  
Front runner and one of the world's top drinks and entertainment companies. Owns 80 per cent of Universal, whose music acts include Counting Crows. It has virtually no exposure in Europe which is EMI's main market.



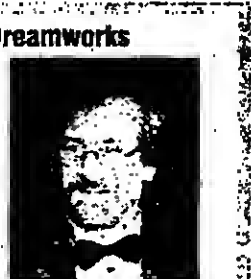
**Viacom**  
The US giant is the world's second largest media group after Time Warner. Owns Paramount and MTV but is selling the Simon & Schuster publishing business so might be distracted. Was linked with rumors of a takeover of the then Thorn-EMI more than two years ago. Still has debts of about £6bn. It has been linked with plans to bid for Pearson. The company is headed by the veteran businessman Sumner Redstone, its chairman and CEO.



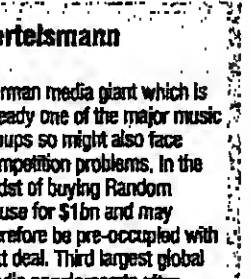
**Disney**  
Michael D Eisner, CEO  
Huge in films and television but lacks a major presence in music. Some of EMI's raunchier acts like Chumbawamba might clash with Disney's family image. But might bid if EMI looked set to fall to rival.



**Sony**  
A leading player in consumer electronics and already a music industry major so might run into competition problems, particularly in Europe. Its music group, which has acts such as Mariah Carey, Pearl Jam and Bruce Springsteen, has annual sales of more than \$3.3bn according to 1995 figures. Labels include Columbia, Epic and Sony Music. Formed in 1946 out of the ruins of the Second World War. It now has interests in video, audio and television equipment as well as in films.



**Dreamworks**  
Steven Spielberg  
A long shot. Film and media company set up by Steven Spielberg, David Geffen, the music mogul, and Jeffrey Katzenberg, the former Disney executive, with \$100m of investment. It is bankrolled with equity and debt of \$2.7bn.



**Bertelsmann**  
German media giant which is already one of the major music groups so might also face competition problems. In the midst of buying Random House for \$1bn and may therefore be pre-occupied with that deal. Third largest global media conglomerate after Disney and Time Warner. Founded in 1835 when Carl Bertelsmann started publishing Lutheran bibles. It has recently formed the BooksOnline venture to compete for the internet sales market. Has a strong presence in books, film and music.



**Kirk Kerkorian**  
US corporate raider. Already has a controlling interest in MGM/United Artists, the film company and a string of casino and leisure interests. As a single bidder would struggle to generate synergies.

## Safeway to sell the more fulfilling yoghurt

By Andrew Yates

SCOTIA, the drugs company behind Olibra, the new ingredient used in yoghurts which makes you feel fuller for longer, revealed yesterday it had teamed up with St Ivel to create a range of new desserts. Unigate, which owns St Ivel, will market the new products in the UK, Ireland, France and Italy. Olibra was developed from a natural fat extract that triggers the release of chemicals that make the brain think the stomach is full. Scotia launched Olibra in January when it went on sale in Sweden as the key ingredient of Maval yoghurt, in

partnership with the Swedish food group Skanemejerier. Since its launch, Maval has won 2 per cent of the Swedish fruit yoghurt market and Scotia now plans to introduce Olibra to consumers around the world.

Olibra is being introduced in the UK under the brand name Skane Dairy Maval in an initial deal between Safeway and Skanemejerier. It is likely to be extended to other supermarkets by the end of the year.

Scotia also announced that it is trimming its product portfolio from 20 drugs to five. It is concentrating on cancer treatments which could be an alternative to chemotherapy.

## US miracle gets even better

By Diane Coyle  
Economics Editor

NEWS of the strongest growth for a year combined with the lowest inflation since Eisenhower was president showed that the astonishing performance of the American economy continued into the first quarter. The Asian crisis helped sustain the economic nirvana by trimming growth to a pace that would not force the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates, analysts said.

The markets celebrated. The benchmark 30-year Treasury bond jumped nearly one and a half points, and the Dow Jones index had gained 141 points to reach 9,092.77 by midday.

The gains helped the FTSE-100 closed higher in London. It was up 95 points at 5,928.3.

The first-quarter increase in GDP amounted to 4.2 per cent at an annual rate, the fastest growth since the same quarter last year. Consumer spending leapt by 5.7 per cent, more than double the previous quarter's rise.

Investment spending by businesses surged at a rate of nearly 18 per cent after a flat fourth quarter. Much of it was spending on computers, which climbed by 19 per cent to an annual rate of \$296.4bn.

"Domestic demand went ballistic," said Ian Shepherdson, chief economist at HSBC Securities in New York.

The economy would have grown even faster were it not for the biggest ever drop in the contribution of exports less imports to growth. Exports in Asia reduced exports by 3.4 per cent, while imports surged 11.6 per cent.

Yet at the same time inflation could not have behaved better. The GDP deflator, the widest measure of inflation, slowed down, rising just 0.9 per cent during the quarter. The deflator for domestic demand fell by 0.1 per cent, the first quarterly decline since 1959.

Separate figures for employment costs also rose less than expected, indicating that the tight jobs market has not caused a pick-up in pay rises. It

rose by 0.7 per cent, down from its 1 per cent gain in the fourth quarter of 1997.

Much of the rise that did occur was down to increased health costs, according to a Bureau of Labour Statistics official. Health insurance costs were up 2.2 per cent in the 12 months to March, but the rise was offset by a drop in the cost of unemployment insurance.

Wall Street economists were swift to take the figures as evidence that the US economy has achieved a new pattern of high growth and low inflation. "It's an outmoded view that growth is dangerous because it accelerates inflation," said Philip Braverman of DKB Securities.

## Clean-up will add £65 to water bills

By Michael Harrison

HOUSEHOLD water bills could rise by as much as £65 a year to pay for an £11bn programme of environmental improvements, the water regulator Ian Byatt said yesterday.

This would be the equivalent of charges rising by 30 per cent more than the general inflation rate between 2000 and 2005, he added. The estimates are based on figures supplied by the water companies and assumes no offsetting efficiency savings.

Mr Byatt said he disputed calculations made by the industry and estimated that the improvements could be

achieved for an additional £18 a year on bills.

Shares in water companies fell on fears that the regulator would force the industry to bear more of the costs of meeting various European directives on environmental improvements. The programme includes measures to cut lead and pesticides in water and improvements in river water and sewage disposal.

Mr Byatt has written to John Prescott, the Secretary of State for Transport, Environment and the Regions, seeking guidance on what level of improvements to the water system the Government wants.

### Yesterday in the markets

#### STOCK MARKETS

Indices	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk High	52 wk Low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	5928.30	95.20	1.63	6150.50	4382.80	3.40
FTSE 250	5610.80	41.90	0.76	5805.80	4384.20	2.88
FTSE 350	2858.10	41.30	1.47	2838.70	2141.80	3.31
FTSE All Share	2788.99	38.58	1.40	2881.12	2105.59	3.29
FTSE SmallCap	2645.90	12.10	0.46	2642.80	2182.10	2.97
FTSE RealIndex	1415.50	3.40	0.24	1417.30	1225.20	3.21
FTSE AIM	1080.10	5.70	0.53	1086.70	965.90	1.07
Dow Jones	9108.46	153.70	1.72	9213.35	8913.97	1.53
Nikkei	15841.25	245.95	1.56	20810.79	14488.21	1.97
Hank Seng	10393.59	37.47	0.36	11820.91	7929.15	9.94
Dax	6107.44	-1.04	-0.02	5442.00	3428.29	1.53

#### INTEREST RATES

Short sterling				UK 10 year gilt				US long bond			
Index	2 month	1 yr	5 yr	Index	2 month	1 yr	5 yr	Index	2 month	1 yr	5 yr
UK	7.50	0.93	7.44	0.38	5.94	-1.58	5.78	-1.81			
US	5.72	-0.10	5.99	-0.32	6.74	-1.01	5.96	-0.88			
Japan	0.82	0.04	0.65	-0.13	1.73	-0.22	2.34	-0.73			
Germany	3.65	0.44	3.97	0.60	4.88	-0.86	5.54	-1.07			

Money Market Rates				Bond Yields			
Index	2 month	1 yr	5 yr	Index	2 month	1 yr	5 yr
UK	7.50	0.93	7.44	0.38	5.94	-1.58	5.78
US	5.72	-0.10	5.99	-0.32	6.74	-1.01	5.96
Japan	0.82	0.04	0.65	-0.13	1.73	-0.22	2.34
Germany	3.65	0.44	3.97	0.60	4.88	-0.86	5.54

MAIN PRICE CHANGES			
Index	Price	Change	% Change
BSE Group	807.50	99.50	12.32
BSE 100	60.00	7.00	13.21
Dax	6107.44	-1.04	-0.02
FTSE 100	5928.30	95.20	1.63
FTSE 250	5610.80	41.90	0.76
FTSE 350	2858.10	41.30	1.47
FTSE All Share	2788.99	38.58	1.40
FTSE SmallCap	2645.90	12.10	0.46
FTSE RealIndex	1415.50	3.40	0.24
FTSE AIM	1080.10	5.70	0.53
Dow Jones	9108.46	153.70	1.72
Nikkei	15841.25	245.95	1.56
Hank Seng	10393.59	37.47	0.36
Dax	6107.44	-1.04	-0.02

#### CURRENCIES

\$/£				DM/£				¥/£			
Index	1 month	3 month	12 month	Index	1 month	3 month	12 month	Index	1 month	3 month	12 month
\$/£	1.6725	+0.25c	1.6230	DM/£	0.5979	-0.09p	0.6161	¥/£	172.45	+0.35	172.10
\$/£	3.0000	+0.30p	2.6110	DM/£	1.7928	-0.17p	1.7325	¥/£	132.41	+0.35	127.10
\$/£	221.45	+0.84	208.93	DM/£	132.41	+0.35	127.10	¥/£	106.30	+0.10	100.10
\$/£	106.30	+0.10	100.10	DM/£	106.30	+0.10	100.10	¥/£			

Found				Dollar			
Index	1 month	3 month	12 month	Index	1 month	3 month	12 month
Found	1.6725	+0.25c	1.6230	Dollar	0.5979	-0.09p	0.6161
Found	3.0000	+0.30p	2.6110	Dollar	1.7928	-0.17p	1.7325
Found	221.45	+0.84	208.93	Dollar	132.41	+0.35	127.10
Found	106.30	+0.10	100.10	Dollar	106.30	+0.10	100.10

OTHER INDICATORS			
Index	1 month	3 month	12 month
Index	1.6725	+0.25c	1.6230
Index	3.0000	+0.30p	2.6110
Index	221.45	+0.84	208.93
Index	106.30	+0.10	100.10

#### TOURIST RATES

Australia (\$)	2.4788	Malta (lira)	0.8291
Austria (schilling)	20.37	Mexican (nuevo peso)	12.90
Belgium (francs)	60.92	Netherlands (guilder)	32.861
Canada (\$)	2.3367	New Zealand (\$)	2.8983
Cyprus (pounds)	0.8471	Norway (kroner)	12.16
Denmark (kroner)	11.14	Portugal (escudo)	284.78
Finland (markka)	8.8571	Saudi Arabia (dollar)	6.0841
France (francs)	9.7300	Singapore (\$)	2.5205
Germany (marks)	2.8120	Sweden (kronor)	245.88
Greece (drachma)	508.22	South Africa (rand)	8.1188
Hong Kong (\$)	12.54	Sweden (krona)	12.53
Ireland (punt)	1.1481	Switzerland (francs)	2.4338
Indian (rupee)	60.97	Thailand (baht)	58.42
Israel (sheqel)	5.7120	Turkey (lira)	388.482
Italy (lira)	2881	USA (\$)	1.5311
Japan (yen)	215.80		
Malaysia (ringgit)	5.9465		

*Rates for income purposes only*  
*Source: The Bank of England*

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## OUTLOOK ON THE UNSEEMLY AUCTION OF EMI, THE BATTLE FOR MORE GROUP, AND THE LATEST EPISODE IN THE PETER YOUNG SCANDAL

# Lost opportunity for a British multi-media giant

TWO months ago, this column wrote that unless Sir Colin Southgate, chairman of EMI, pulled his socks up, he and his company were toast. It has taken longer than might have been expected, but finally the first bid has rolled in. Thanks to EMI's internal e-mail system, we even know who it is and what the price might be. The company apparently informed UK employees yesterday that it was Ed Bronfman's Seagram and that he was bidding \$80p a share. Since the Stock Exchange was told only that an approach had been received from an unnamed party, this seems to be one of those rare instances of the staff knowing what's going on before the outside world.

But then this is the music business and they do like to play jokes, don't they. Hoax or not, the e-mail is an entirely believable one. Mr Bronfman is everyone's odds-on favourite, but his must surely be only the opening shot, bound to be followed in swift order by others. EMI is the only high international music company which it is remotely possible to bid for. Of the other major players, Sony and Time Warner are too big and diversified, Bertelsmann is privately owned, and Polygram is controlled by Philips. This gives EMI a rarity value which ought to ensure a fierce and hotly contested auction.

Bertelsmann has bought Sir Colin Southgate's band once before, but in the end the merger proposed was so tenuous in structure that the EMI board had little difficulty in dismissing the approach before putting it to shareholders. In any case, competition issues, and the fact that Bertelsmann has just bought Random House

for cash, may keep the Germans on the sidelines this time round. Competition difficulties will be a big stumbling block for the rest of the big five too, but don't rule them out.

Meanwhile there are a host of powerful media players trying, in this multi-media world, to gain a foothold in the music business. Despite its best endeavours, Disney has thus far failed to grow a serious presence in the industry. The strategy here is to mirror Sony and Time Warner, which combine film and music product and distribution. Then there are the straight media distributors, such as Viacom. The list of possible suitors is almost endless, as well as almost wholly foreign.

How did it come to this—that Britain's leading music company should be auctioned off in this unseemly fashion in the showrooms of New York? The blame, if that is the right word, lies mainly with Sir Colin. In his pursuit of shareholder value, Sir Colin sold or demerged all around him until he was left with a pure music company which would obviously be attractive to bidders. No one can fault him for that. The problem is that since demerging from Thorn, EMI has been allowed to drift. As a symptom of that drift, there have also been some high profile management restructurings, culminating in Sir Colin's failure to get his preferred successor, "Lucky" Jim Ffield, ratified by the board. To shareholders, the company has looked all at sea.

What's about to happen to EMI is a shame. In this company there was a chance to build a major British based multi-media company encompassing

music, publishing and film. That chance seems to have been squandered.

## At war over street furniture

FROM this side of the fence, it looks like the Napoleonic wars, Agincourt, Poitiers and Crecy all over again. The story so far. Mure Group, Britain's leading poster advertising company, last month agreed a £441m takeover bid from Clear Channel of the US. Embarrassingly, this bid was then topped by JC Decaux, a family-owned French company which just happens to be one of More Group's more aggressive competitors, particularly in the fast growing market of advertising on street furniture.

As a consequence, Roger Parry, chief executive of More Group, had to withdraw his recommendation of the Clear Channel bid and he is now technically neutral, awaiting a decision from the competition authorities on the Decaux bid and/or whether the Americans decide to better it. That's the official position, anyway. However, Jean-Francois Decaux, the younger of the father and son team that runs Decaux, does not believe it to be the true one. He suspects that Mr Parry is against him and he cannot understand why, given that as things stand, his is the better offer and therefore the one More Group shareholders are bound to prefer. Could it be ancient national rivalries?

Whatever the case, Decaux's bankers, Lazard Brothers, seem to have been putting a number of concerns to the Takeover Panel. The question is, should Mr Parry or his

officers be lobbying for a reference of the French bid to the Monopolies and Mergers Commission, given that their shareholders could lose out if this happens? The French bid is worth 80p a share more.

Mr Parry is obviously aware that he has to maintain a strictly neutral stance in these things. There has been lobbying from Clear Channel, but you would expect that. More Group and its officers, on the other hand, are under strict instructions to do nothing. Some interesting issues are raised by all this, none the less. Can companies really be expected to stand idly by and feign complete neutrality if they think a bid is anti-competitive and against the public interest?

Companies nearly always enjoin the competition authorities into the defence when faced by a hostile bid. The key point here, though, is that strictly speaking a defence can only be mounted on the basis that the board thinks the offer undervalues their company. It is then fair game to use any legal tactic available to see off the bidder. Plainly that is not the case in this bid since the board has already recommended a lower offer. However, the difference is a subtle one and even the most avid supporter of shareholder value would understand the difficulty most managements would have in being taken over by their head-to-head competitor.

If Mr Decaux does succeed, the last laugh could be on him. Research shows that despite the obvious advantages of monopoly and scale that occur when two fiercely competing companies merge, the end result in terms of shareholder value is nearly always disastrous. Why? Because fierce competitors are rarely compatible, culturally or in

terms of their people, and the merged company is likely to become involved in years of debilitating infighting. We'll see.

## Trustees pay the price

UNTIL the balloon went up, courtesy of Peter Young, the job of trustee to a unit trust must have seemed one of the easier ways of making money known to man, or at least to the City. Fund managers simply don't bend the rules by playing fast and loose with investors' money do they? The Morgan Grenfell Asset Management scandal rudely interrupted those assumptions and caused a scramble among trustees to ensure their compliance checks were up to scratch.

Peter Young was dismissed almost immediately although no other disciplinary action has yet been taken. Five other Morgan Grenfell executives have paid with their jobs too. The firm itself has paid both a hefty fine and compensation. Now, at last, 18 months after the scandal came to light, the regulatory authorities in the shape of Imro, have caught up with the trustees, first General Accident and then Royal Bank of Scotland.

It was their job to ensure Mr Young was investing clients' money within the rules, particularly those relating to what proportion of funds could be put into highly speculative, unlisted securities. They have now agreed to pay fines and costs totalling £800,000—paltry set against the £220m that disappeared, but nevertheless proportionate to their role in the catalogue of failures that allowed the affair to happen.

# Sale spells end for Hambros

By Lea Paterson

THE DEATH knell finally sounded for one of the City's oldest institutions yesterday when Hambros sold most of its remaining assets to Investec of South Africa for £428m.

The deal marks the end of the break-up process initiated last year following a series of difficulties at the bank.

Investec's offer, described as "full and fair" by analysts, does not include the bank's stakes in Hambro Countrywide, the estate agency, or Hambro Insurance Services (HIS). Both Countrywide and HIS

are to be demerged from the group.

Sir Chips Keswick, Hambros' chairman, said: "I believe that these proposed offers are attractive for the shareholders of Hambros and are the best available option for realising value. They will also provide a definitive solution to the future of Hambros."

The deal puts a break-up value on the company of 307p a share, at the top end of City estimates. Hambros' shares leapt on the news of Investec's offer and ended the day up 12.5p at 292.5p.

The Hambros' assets sold to Investec include a cash surplus

of £231m realised from the sale of the group's core banking business to Société Générale of France, a Canadian fund manager, and Hambros' diverse direct investment portfolio, comprising some 50 holdings.

The package also includes Hambros' 44 per cent stake in Guinness Flight Hambro Asset Management (Guinness Flight). This will bring Investec's stake in Guinness Flight to 88 per cent following its acquisition of Guinness Mahon—another old British banking name—earlier this year. At the time of the Guinness Mahon sale, Guinness Flight management were thought to be unhappy with the new ownership arrangements and were said to be pushing for a management buy-out. An Investec spokesperson said yesterday that talks were ongoing between Investec and Guinness Flight management.

HIS, in which Hambros holds a 52 per cent stake, has appointed financial advisers DLJ Phoenix Securities to "assist in reviewing all options". This review may lead to an offer for the company.



Air attack: Saab's Gripen fighter, which BAE already markets under a joint venture

## BAE buys into Saab

By Michael Harrison

THE consolidation of Europe's defence and aerospace industries took a further step forward yesterday after British Aerospace agreed to pay £269m for a 35 per cent stake in Sweden's Saab, maker of the Gripen combat aircraft.

BAE will also nominate three members of the nine-strong Saab board and jointly select its chairman and managing director along with Investor, the Swedish group which owns the

business. The Saab investment is the second major European deal by BAE, which last year acquired Skanes Defence for just over £300m. The Saab deal does not include the car marque, which is separately owned.

BAE already has extensive ties with Saab across a range of activities including fighter aircraft and aerostuctures.

BAE has a joint venture agreement to market the Gripen in wider export markets but yesterday's deal will give it a direct stake in the programme

to supply 204 Gripen aircraft to the Swedish air force, one of the largest in Europe. Saab has also tendered successfully recently for aerostuctures work on the Airbus, in which BAE has a 20 per cent stake, and will be well placed to undertake further sub-contract work as the Airbus programme expands.

The two have an extensive history of collaboration on guided weapons programmes including the RB70, a medium range missile developed from the UK Sky Flash missile.

## Irish pubs have peaked, says Allied Domecq

ALLIED DOMECQ, the pub and spirits giant, yesterday said the Irish pub market had peaked and was in decline. Growth at its Firkin pub chains is also showing signs of slowing down amid intense competition among the major operators who are investing huge sums in the themed pub market. Allied has decided not to open any more of its Scruffy Murphy's Irish pub brand and is also retreating back the expansion of the 178-strong Firkin chain. Instead the group is concentrating on growing the number of outlets designed to appeal to the family. Overall Allied's managed pub profits rose 6 per cent, a figure which disappointed industry analysts.

Investment column, page 26

## Regan trust disappears

ENTREPRENEUR Andrew Regan's investment trust Lanica Trust effectively wrote its own obituary yesterday when it said it would amalgamate with coffee shop group City Gourmets. Lanica, whose shares were suspended last year, said City Gourmets would take over all its assets, debts, liabilities and obligations and the Lanica name would disappear, with shareholders receiving 1.093 City Gourmet shares in place of every Lanica share. Mr Regan, who last year made an unsuccessful and ultimately discredited attempt to take over the Co-operative Wholesale Society, will buy some of the group's assets for £204,750 in cash as part of the deal.

## Peugot drives profits up

THE COVENTRY-BASED car maker Peugeot reported its best profits for seven years on the back of record sales. Profits last year reached £52.5m, the highest since 1990 and £22m up on 1996, as sales of Peugeot cars reached 167,472. The increase will trigger a windfall profit-related payout for the workforce at Ryton. Production last year was just below its record level at 85,500 and this year sees the introduction of a new model at Coventry backed by a £100m investment.

## US airlines link up

UNITED AIRLINES and Delta Airlines announced a global link up and code-sharing deal—the third such alliance between leading US carriers this year. Delta and United said the alliance would generate savings of \$600m a year and would not involve any route closures. However, the link-up, coming hard on the heels of American-USAirways and Northwest-Continental, increases the risk that US and-trust authorities may decide to veto all three alliances.

## Warning on euro

FAILURE to join the euro could result in Britain losing investment projects, the Chemical Industries Association warned. Chris Andrews, chairman of its business and trade board, urged the Government to decide on membership before the election. A CIA survey showed the UK chemical industry investment will reach £2.76bn this year and £2.7bn next—a 3 per cent fall on 1997 levels in real terms. Output this year is forecast to drop by 1 per cent due in part to the strength of sterling.

## Consumers cool

CONSUMER confidence is cool as the series of interest rate rises begins to bite and post-election euphoria finally wears off, according to the latest quarterly bulletin from Business Strategies. Jacqui Timothy, managing economist, said rates should stay at their present level and forecast a soft landing for the economy this year with the strong service sector preventing manufacturing industry from dragging Britain into recession.

# Texas bags Energy Group

By Michael Harrison

THE year long-battle for control of Energy Group, owner of Eastern Electricity, finally came to an end yesterday after PacificCorp dropped out of the bidding, leaving Texas Utilities to clinch the takeover with a £4.45bn recommended offer.

The outcome prompted immediate speculation that the defeated bidder might turn its sights on another UK electricity company and shares in both PowerGen and National Power rose sharply.

PacificCorp, which began the takeover tussle with a £3.9bn bid last June, withdrew after the

Takeover Panel intervened by ruling that the two US utilities had to submit sealed bids to decide the outcome of the contest.

There was confusion and irritation in the City as to why PacificCorp had not pulled out earlier. The winning bid from Texas is worth 840p a share compared with the 820p offered by PacificCorp, which was advised by Goldman Sachs.

Last night, PacificCorp said it had decided not to increase its offer because it did not see "acceptable financial returns to PacificCorp shareholders at values in excess of 820p."

One analyst, expressing a widely held view, said: "If that

was the case why did they not pull out 10 days ago when Texas was cleared by the competition authorities to bid at 840p a share?"

Eric Nye, chairman of Texas Utilities, said he was pleased that the higher offer had prevailed. The Energy Group, led by chairman Derek Bonham, urged shareholders to accept the Texas offer as soon as possible. The offer closes on 19 May.

Energy Group, which also owns the US coal producer Peabody, which Texas has agreed to sell to Lehman Merchant Banking Partners for \$2.3bn. There are rumours that PacificCorp may seek to acquire

Peabody as a consolation prize.

The conclusion to the long-running bid contest will make Eastern the eighth British regional electricity company to be taken over by an American utility. John Devaney, the executive chairman of Eastern, will be offered a senior position by the new owners but he is not expected to stay with the Energy Group.

Sources in the Texas camp suggested that PacificCorp may never have intended to raise its offer but by holding off making an announcement was simply trying to "spool" Texas into bidding against itself. A PacificCorp spokesman denied this.

## Biotech investors demand action now

By Nigel Cope  
Associate City Editor

LEADING institutional shareholders in British Biotech stepped up the pressure on the beleaguered drug development company yesterday, urging the board to issue a full statement in the next few days or risk an emergency general meeting.

Major investors such as Perpetual are becoming increasingly frustrated at the delaying tactics of the board, which has indicated that it could be several weeks before it issues a detailed circular countering allegations made by Dr Andrew Millar, its former

head of clinical trials who was sacked last week.

Bob Yerbury of Perpetual, said: "We continue to have concerns and they need to be addressed as a matter of urgency."

Another leading shareholder said: "We cannot be talking about weeks before this circular. It must be days. Shareholders and advisers need to satisfy themselves as to whether there is any validity to these claims. I think there probably is and if so then there would need to be some changes to the front team."

British Biotech said: "We are preparing a comprehensive circular to prospectus standards. That would normally take in excess of four weeks."

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# Doubts are banished as EMI leads Footsie rally

## MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

EMI led the stock market higher as worries that the bull run was over evaporated. Confirmation that the showbiz group was a takeover target helped Footsie to rally 95.2 points to 5,928.3. Supporting indices were also strong.

With financials recapturing some of their faded glory the market quickly took on a more positive appearance, and at least for the time being, the doubts which had nibbled at confidence were banished.

A strong New York and a further downgrading of higher interest rate fears were other encouraging influences.

EMI, in hectic trading, was at one time 129p higher, the shares closed at 607.5p, up 99.5p. Both EMI and its former partner, the Thorn rentals group, have had a depressing run since the summer of 1996. EMI topped the equivalent of 738p; Thorn, on the

receiving end of a yet unidentified approach, rose 2p to 211p against a 402.5p high.

EMI's would-be acquirer is also a mystery although most feel it is Seagram, the Canadian drinks group which seems to get most of its inroads these days from its involvement in the entertainment industry.

Allied Domecq, the retailing and spirits group, fell 6p to 615p after six-month figures. If Seagram does bid for EMI, Allied, under pressure to develop its drinks side after the creation of Diageo, could find itself forced to embrace the Seagram spirits operation.

Financials were helped along by some chirpy analysts' comments and, in the case of insurers, good new business figures. Commercial Union, which has endured a depressing run, jumped 82p to 1,119p and its chosen partner, General Accident, put on 88p to 1,406p. Schroders rallied 143p to

2,933p and National Westminster Bank 42p to 1,197p.

Hambros, one of the City's oldest merchant banks with a 159-year pedigree, gained 12.5p to 292.5p after Investec of South Africa made an agreed £428m offer. The estate agent and insurance operations are being demerged.

Energy, the electricity group, fell 25.5p to 638.5p as Texas Utilities emerged victorious from the titanic bid struggle with PacificCorp. But PowerGen edged ahead another 10p to 808p as the market continued to toy with the idea that PacificCorp could direct its sights on PG.

Wednesday's order-driven trading confusion left British Petroleum down from a fictitious 960p to 944.5p. At one time the shares were 39p lower at 921p. TI, the other casualty, closed up 22p to 537p.

British Aerospace's 35p cent interest in Saab, the Swedish aerospace group, pushed the shares 3p (after

25p) higher to 1,998p. BG jumped 11.5p to 319.5p on Dresdner Kleinwort Benson support.

Water shares were ruffled by a suggestion from the industry regulator Ofwat that they could be more efficient. Thames Water was lowered 10p to 975p and United Utilities 15p to 832p.

NRP, the property group

now embracing stockbroker Teather & Greenwood, returned at 76.5p, against a 69.5p suspension price.

AMEC, the building group which has been the subject of takeover action, hardened 5.5p to 182p. A persistent buyer has been evident. Credit Lyonnais says buy, declaring: "The recovery is well under way".

MSB International, the computer group, firmed 2.5p to 970p after director Mark Goldberg placed shares at 950p, raising £23.75m, which gives him the war chest to buy the 85 per cent of Crystal Palace FC he does not own.

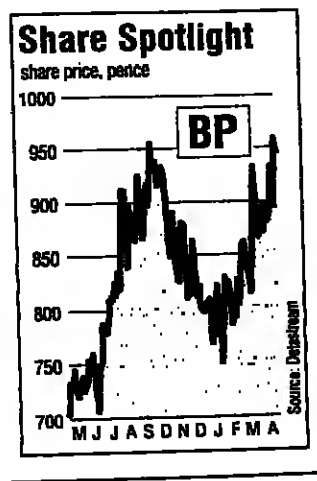
Belhaven Brewery enjoyed a speculative run, gaining 10p to 205p, a peak. Finance director David Morrison said no takeover approach had been made. Greenalls, the hotel and pub chain, was another to collect a round of rumours; the shares added 10.5p to 485p.

Unigate became involved in its Mavel yoghurt, which is being presented as a slimming aid. The yoghurt has been on sale in Sweden since the start of the year and launched recently in this country under the Skana Dairy Mavel name.

British Biotech was busily trading, recovering 7p to 60p. Zeneca gained 124p to 2,576p after its breast cancer drug, after its breast cancer drug, Nolvadex, went to the US Food and Drug Administration for approval and its migraine drug was said to be safe when taken with the anti-depression treatment Prozac.

Continuing, if faint, hopes that the Glaxo Wellcome-SmithKline Beecham merger will be resurrected helped SB 25.5p higher to 713p and Glaxo 49p to 1,690p.

Inch Kenneth Kajang, the Malaysian leisure and plan-tation group, had another remarkable session, gaining 250p to 625p. The shares have risen 500p in two days. A year ago they were 850p.



## TAKING STOCK

SHIELD DIAGNOSTIC rose 50p to 627.5p as rumours of corporate action went round the market. Merck of the US and Roche of Switzerland were the names in the frame.

The American group was said to plan a 950p bid; Roche would be content with paying 800p a share for 30 per cent. The only development was share buying by stockbroker Colin Blackbourn, a longtime fan of Shield. He lifted his stake to more than 3 per cent, believing the shares are "undiscovered" and "undervalued" and a "speculative stock". By increasing his stake to a notifiable level he has, he says, put his money where it counts.

ROBERT WALTERS, the high flying recruitment group, shaded 11p to 467.5p after Merrill Lynch lowered its recommendation from buy to neutral. Its cat its profits forecast by £1m to £10m for this year and is looking for £12.8m next. The shares touched 574.5p last month.

## Alcoholic Beverages

Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
494 AB InBev	450.00	-0.50	4.0	18.0	0.00
495 AB InBev	450.00	-0.50	4.0	18.0	0.00
496 AB InBev	450.00	-0.50	4.0	18.0	0.00
497 AB InBev	450.00	-0.50	4.0	18.0	0.00
498 AB InBev	450.00	-0.50	4.0	18.0	0.00

## Banks, Merchant

Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
780 Bank of Scotland	780.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
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782 Bank of Scotland	780.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
783 Bank of Scotland	780.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
784 Bank of Scotland	780.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00

## Banks, Retail

Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
830 HSBC	830.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
831 HSBC	830.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
832 HSBC	830.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
833 HSBC	830.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
834 HSBC	830.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00

## Breweries, Pubs & Rest

Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
920 Carlsberg	920.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
921 Carlsberg	920.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
922 Carlsberg	920.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
923 Carlsberg	920.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
924 Carlsberg	920.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00

## High Low Stock

Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
494 AB InBev	450.00	-0.50	4.0	18.0	0.00
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Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
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782 Bank of Scotland	780.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
783 Bank of Scotland	780.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
784 Bank of Scotland	780.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00

## High Low Stock

Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
830 HSBC	830.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
831 HSBC	830.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
832 HSBC	830.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
833 HSBC	830.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
834 HSBC	830.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00

## High Low Stock

Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
920 Carlsberg	920.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
921 Carlsberg	920.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
922 Carlsberg	920.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
923 Carlsberg	920.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
924 Carlsberg	920.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00

## High Low Stock

Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
494 AB InBev	450.00	-0.50	4.0	18.0	0.00
495 AB InBev	450.00	-0.50	4.0	18.0	0.00
496 AB InBev	450.00	-0.50	4.0	18.0	0.00
497 AB InBev	450.00	-0.50	4.0	18.0	0.00
498 AB InBev	450.00	-0.50	4.0	18.0	0.00

## High Low Stock

Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
780 Bank of Scotland	780.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
781 Bank of Scotland	780.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
782 Bank of Scotland	780.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
783 Bank of Scotland	780.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
784 Bank of Scotland	780.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00

## High Low Stock

Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
830 HSBC	830.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
831 HSBC	830.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
832 HSBC	830.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
833 HSBC	830.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
834 HSBC	830.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00

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Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
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923 Carlsberg	920.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
924 Carlsberg	920.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00

## High Low Stock

Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
494 AB InBev	450.00	-0.50	4.0	18.0	0.00
495 AB InBev	450.00	-0.50	4.0	18.0	0.00
496 AB InBev	450.00	-0.50	4.0	18.0	0.00
497 AB InBev	450.00	-0.50	4.0	18.0	0.00
498 AB InBev	450.00	-0.50	4.0	18.0	0.00

## High Low Stock

Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
780 Bank of Scotland	780.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
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833 HSBC	830.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
834 HSBC	830.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00

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922 Carlsberg	920.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
923 Carlsberg	920.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00
924 Carlsberg	920.00	-0.50	2.0	12.0	0.00

## High Low Stock

Stock	Price	Chg	Yld	P/E	Div
494 AB InBev	450.00	-0.50	4.0	18.0	0.00
495 AB InBev	450.00	-0.50	4.0	18.0	0.00
496 AB InBev	450.00	-0.50	4.0	18.0	0.00
497 AB InBev	450.00	-0.50	4.0	18.0	0.00
498 AB InBev	450.00	-0.50	4.0	18.0	0.00

## High Low Stock

52	206 76	EMAP	209.00	-0.50	1.4	34	
54	725 88	Esq	607.50	+99.50	2.3	52.1	
	7248	IGS Eurocom	1975.00	-	1.3	22.3	6
26	704 48	Flamach	492.50	-2.00	-	-	2
97	235 88	GCT Group	208.00	-	4.0	-	2
98	303 B6	GVR Group	185.50	-	1.7	29.4	
	300 20	Homes	270.00	-	5.0	11.5	7



# Why global markets need to be open to free information flows



**DIANE COYLE**  
ON THE MOST  
IMPORTANT  
LESSON FROM  
ASIA'S CRISIS

WE LIVE in an economy whose life blood is information. It is one of the things that everybody knows. Everybody, that is, save for one category of players in the world economy - governments. Governments need to wiser up to the information age, not in terms of having the right kind of technology policy or enthusiasm about the internet in speeches, but in the more fundamental sense of recognising that less than full disclosure of information is as much a matter of efficiency as it is a matter of democracy. This is the deep lesson of the Asian crisis.

There is a great appetite to draw lessons from Asia, to try to avoid repeats. The responses are tending to fall into two camps. One, the backlash camp, has concluded that globalisation is a bad thing, and needs to be tamed and resisted. It has a lunatic fringe but its more sensible proposals include introducing restrictions on inflows of foreign "hot money" by imposing reserve requirements for the first year of an inward investment - the system in Chile.

Another popular idea is a "Tobin Tax", a small tax on foreign-exchange transactions which would, in the words of its inventor, the Nobel laureate James Tobin, throw sand in the

wheels of the global markets when they are careering out of control.

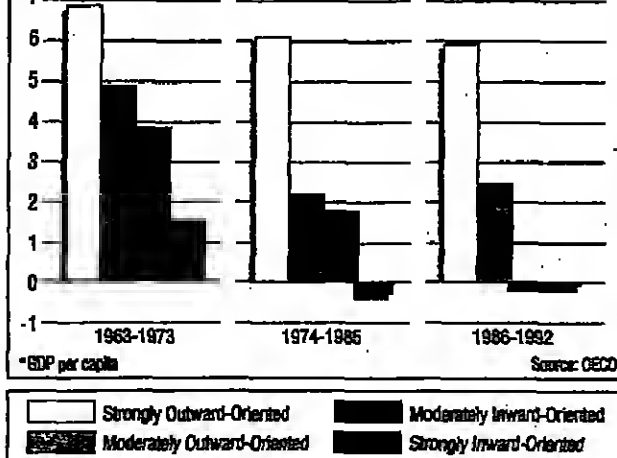
The opposite point of view, the Panglossian camp that insists all is for the best in the globalising world economy, reckons the crisis reflects inadequate liberalisation. Its proponents will admit that globalisation causes upheavals and problems about the distribution of gains. Nevertheless, the gains are undeniable. A new report from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) this week, "Open Markets Matter", from which the chart is taken, spells out the links between free trade, free investment and economic prosperity. The moral drawn by this camp is that, whatever the turmoil caused by the crisis, it is essential to press ahead with more and more deregulation and globalisation. Preventing crises is a matter of liberalising in a more measured way, perhaps, and with better supervision, but it must go ahead with minimal political interference.

Of course, the fact that the initial reactions have divided into two basically opposed camps has set the stage for a series of political rows over what has become known as the international financial architecture. Take the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI), which crumbled at this week's OECD meeting, to the undisputed glee of some campaigners. The long negotiations had shaped this into a sensible set of rules, with some exclusions to defend national interests and the first ever recognition of basic environmental and social standards in a multilateral treaty. But it has been derailed by politicians recognising a domestic backlash against globalisation, even though they privately admit that a new framework governing investment by multinationals is needed.

As France's minister of commerce put it at this week's OECD meeting, demanding a suspension of the talks: "Globalisation... has a fundamental human, social and environmental dimension which must

## The rewards of openness

Trade orientation and growth, %



be taken into account from the start." It could not be left to the experts and diplomats alone, he argued.

However unfortunate the effects of French stubbornness on the MAI - a treaty which does more than most international financial agreements to recognise such concerns - it indicates that some more considered assessments of the Asian crisis and its lessons for globalisation are starting to filter through. For the backlash camp ignores the huge economic gains that the post-war process of globalisation has delivered, while the Panglossian camp overlooks the justified political concerns about the costs imposed by the way that process is occurring.

A recent paper by Harvard economics professor Dani Rodrik attempts to explain why some developing countries have enjoyed massive gains in per capita living standards while others have not. So, despite the past year's upheavals, Asia has fared well while Latin America has not. He finds the key is not simply the degree of openness to the world economy. Rather, it is how well different countries handle the turbulence that inevitably results from setting sail on the choppy seas of globalisation.

"How well" turns out to depend on institutional factors such as the degree of ethnic division within a country, the extent of military repression, the

quality of the civil service and so on. These influences - whose measurement is necessarily a bit rough and ready - explain more of the difference in growth than do conventional measures such as exports as a share of GDP. Professor Rodrik concludes: "The main message that I take from the kind of evidence presented here is that it is not whether you globalise that matters, it is how you globalise. The world market is a source of disruption and upheaval as much as it is an opportunity for profit and economic growth."

Taking part in globalisation therefore demands a programme of institutional reform, which would include - on top of the IMF recipe of low government budget deficits, an anti-inflation strategy and privatisation - an improvement in the quality of the government apparatus. It would require increased democratisation in place of the typical technocratic approach to economic management in emerging markets. And it would need an improved social safety net so that the damage caused by crises like the present one in Asia does not fall entirely on the very poorest.

One of these themes is taken up by another economist, Rudi Dornbusch at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (in a paper available from his web site at <http://web.mit.edu/rudi/www/>). Professor Dornbusch is sym-

pathetic to proposals like a Tobin tax or controls on short-term capital. But he points out that they cannot prevent crises, any more than seat belts prevent car crashes: "A Tobin tax would not have avoided the Asian bankruptcy. Anyone who contemplates a 30 per cent depreciation will happily pay a 0.1 per cent tax."

He adds that high transaction costs in emerging markets add up to the equivalent of a Tobin tax anyway. Rather than emphasising capital controls or other brakes on globalisation, he concludes: "A modern answer to the question of integration with the world capital market is enthusiastically positive."

Capital markets deliver the potential for higher living standards and prevent governments from running bad economic policies - all round good news for savers, investors and workers. The catch with liberalisation as we know it, he argues, is a shortage of information to make it work properly.

For if modern economies rely on information, for the financial markets it is essential. Financial crises all, in some way, result from unexpected bad news. Crisis prevention depends on minimising the unexpected. The real reason is not that financial systems in emerging markets need to be better supervised or sweetheart deals with cronies brought to an end. It is that maximum disclosure is absolutely key. Professor Dornbusch condemns the IMF and the credit rating agencies for their failure to transmit necessary information to the markets.

His conclusion can be taken one step further. It is not just to the markets that openness and transparency are essential. They are also fundamental to the political credibility of globalisation. People do not trust experts who tell them everything is all for the best when it patently is not. If one result of the events in Asia is to help end the technocratic dominance of international finance, this will help ensure that globalisation really does deliver the benefits it promises.

## PEOPLE & BUSINESS

### JOHN WILLCOCK



THE former chairman of BNB Resources is suing the headhunting company for £2.1 million over his departure earlier this year following a boardroom row.

Co-founder David Norman resigned from the company in February after a disagreement over the future of Norman Broadbent International, the high profile headhunting business of which Mr Norman was executive chairman.

Since then he has been negotiating a compensation package with the company, but this week the talks broke down and he issued a writ demanding compensation. The company says it will contest the action.

Mr Norman was on a two-year rolling contract at BNB. In 1996 he was paid £627,000, in a year when the company made pre-tax profits of just £5.36 million.

Then last year Miles Broadbent, another co-founder of the business, left with several other senior staff to set up a rival firm. Under pressure from shareholders, Mr Norman scaled his role back from chairman and chief executive, and spent the last two and a half months of the year as non-executive chairman. His pay fell to £397,000 in 1997.

Then in February Mr Norman resigned, according to the company, "as a result of differences regarding strategy and management". He is not exactly destitute at the moment, however. On 17 April he exercised a range of options and sold 1,591,591 shares in BNB, when the share price was hovering around the £2 mark.

The company, which also owns a raft of IT, advertising and middle management selection agencies, has instructed City law firm Slaughter & May to defend it.

The company said yesterday: "The board regrets that Mr Norman has felt unable to accept proposals made by the board which, it has been advised, would fairly compensate Mr Norman in accordance with the Company's contractual obligations to him. Accordingly it is the Board's intention to defend this writ."

MARGARET BECKETT, President of the Board of Trade, has obtained a disquali-

cation order for the maximum 15-year period allowed against Stephen James Musker.

Mr Musker acted as a director of Stratton Europe, a company involved in the development of oil drilling technology in Billingham, Cleveland.

An inquiry into Stratton in 1994 under the Companies Act, which was then confirmed by a court hearing, revealed Mr Musker's misconduct. This included, according to the DTI yesterday, "the production of a forged board minute, the issue of shares to himself and associates for no valid consideration, false representations to investors to induce them to invest, and the drawing of substantial personal benefits for himself and associates when the company was clearly unprofitable."

The court also considered "Mr Musker's record of involvement in a number of other corporate failures in recent years," the DTI said.

DAVID GRAY has been appointed finance director to Golf Club Holdings, a company which owns the Lambourne, the South Winchester and the Vale Golf Club, amongst others.

Which raises the obvious question: Do you have to be good at golf to get the job? "Not at all," replies Mr Gray, modestly. When asked whether he has a handicap, he says: "Only my lack of talent."

In fact, Mr Gray sees this lack of success on the fairway as a positive advantage, in that he will approach his job with a clear view, untainted by any enthusiast's passions.

He recalls his 15 years at Thorn EMI in order to back up his argument: "It's like anything else. You wouldn't expect Jim Ffield to be a devastating rock'n'roll performer."

Mr Ffield, of course, recently hit the headlines by receiving a £12m payoff from EMI when he left the music company.

Mr Gray gained valuable experience working as finance director for David Lloyd Leisure during the period when the former tennis star's company was floating.

But he is still proud of his comparative lack of sporting prowess. He says the "golf business is littered with the corpses" of businesses set up by golf nuts who fancied indulging their obsession.

IF YOU get fish fingers the next time you are invited to lunch at accountants Ernst & Young, here's why: Terry Carter of E&Y's corporate recovery team has just been appointed to restructure a Bulgarian fishing company, Okeanski Ribolov.

Terry was appointed by the Bourgas District Court following a request by shareholders. The business owns and controls port facilities in Bourgas, including a 400-metre wharf and a hotel. It also runs five fish freezer ships, three of which are currently out fishing in the Atlantic.

Mr Carter will compile a report for Bulgaria's Ministry of Industry, and will then attempt to sell the business as a going concern. So if you know of a market for Bulgarian fish fingers, give him a bell.

## Foreign Exchange Rates

Country	Spot	1 month	3 month
UK	1.0000		
Australia	2.5673	2.5664	2.5664
Austria	2.1177	2.1161	2.1161
Belgium	36.7777	36.7777	36.7777
Canada	2.3921	2.3889	2.3775
Denmark	114.48	114.48	114.48
ECU	1.9360	1.9360	1.9360
Finland	5.9457	5.9457	5.9457
France	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595
Germany	1.9360	1.9360	1.9360
Greece	340.75	340.75	340.75
Hong Kong	7.7563	7.7563	7.7563
Ireland	1.3760	1.3760	1.3760
Italy	2.0361	2.0361	2.0361
Japan	161.08	161.08	161.08
Korea	208.50	208.50	208.50
Malaysia	3.4075	3.4075	3.4075
Netherlands	3.3360	3.3360	3.3360
New Zealand	3.0361	3.0361	3.0361
Norway	4.7563	4.7563	4.7563
Portugal	208.50	208.50	208.50
Saudi Arabia	3.4075	3.4075	3.4075
Singapore	2.0361	2.0361	2.0361
South Africa	6.5595	6.5595	6.5595
Spain	166.38	166.38	166.38
Sweden	8.4663	8.4663	8.4663
Switzerland	2.0361	2.0361	2.0361
US	1.0000		

## Other Spot Rates

Country	Sterling	Dollar
Argentina	1572	10000
Brazil	1838	1443
China	8.2775	8.2775
China Rep	8.2775	8.2775
Egypt	5.9457	5.9457
Ghana	388.77	388.77
Hungary	350.00	350.00
India	66.43	66.43
Indonesia	1572	10000
Kuwait	5.9457	5.9457
Nigeria	143.00	855.00

## Interest Rates

UK	Germany	US	Japan
Base 2.25%	Discount 2.50%	Prime 6.50%	Discount 0.50%
3 month 3.00%	Discount 4.50%	Discount 5.00%	Discount 2.75%
6 month 3.50%	Discount 5.00%	Discount 5.50%	Discount 3.00%
9 month 3.75%	Discount 5.50%	Discount 6.00%	Discount 3.25%
12 month 4.00%	Discount 6.00%	Discount 6.50%	Discount 3.50%

## Bond Yields

Country	3 month	6 month	9 month	12 month
Australia	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
Belgium	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
Canada	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
Denmark	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
ECU	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
France	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
Germany	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
Greece	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
Hong Kong	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
Ireland	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
Italy	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
Japan	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
Korea	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
Malaysia	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
Netherlands	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
New Zealand	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
Norway	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
Portugal	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
Saudi Arabia	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
Singapore	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
South Africa	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
Spain	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
Sweden	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
Switzerland	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
US	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75

## Money Market Rates

Overnight	1 week	1 month	3 months	6 months	1 year
UK	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
Germany	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
US	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75
Japan	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75	4.75

## Liffe Financial Futures

Contract	Settlement	High	Low	Open
UK Gilts	Jun-98	106.3	106.3	106.3
US T-Bills	Jun-98	103.0	103.0	103.0
US T-Bonds	Jun-98	103.0	103.0	103.0
US T-Notes	Jun-98	103.0	103.0	103.0
US T-Shorts	Jun-98	103.0	103.0	103.0
US T-Longs	Jun-98	103.0	103.0	103.0
US T-Shorts	Jun-98	103.0	103.0	103.0
US T-Longs	Jun-98	103.0	103.0	103.0
US T-Shorts	Jun-98	103.0	103.0	103.0
US T-Longs	Jun-98	103.0	103.0	103.0

## Liffe FTSE 100 Index Option

Series	Call	Put	Call	Put
1000	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
2000	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
3000	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
4000	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00
5000	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

## Commodity Indices

Index	Value	Change
Oil	100.00	0.00
Gold	100.00	0.00
Silver	100.00	0.00
Copper	100.00	0.00
Aluminum	100.00	0.00
Zinc	100.00	0.00
Nickel	100.00	0.00
Lead	100.00	0.00
Iron Ore	100.00	0.00
Wheat	100.00	0.00
Corn	100.00	0.00
Soybeans	100.00	0.00
Cotton	100.00	0.00
Wool	100.00	0.00
Sugar	100.00	0.00
Coffee	100.00	0.00
Tea	100.00	0.00
Spices	100.00	0.00
Rubber	100.00	0.00
Latex	100.00	0.00
Timber	100.00	0.00
Paper	100.00	0.00
Textiles	100.00	0.00
Leather	100.00	0.00
Metals	100.00	0.00
Minerals	100.00	0.00
Fuels	100.00	0.00
Coal	100.00	0.00
Natural Gas	100.00	0.00
Electricity	100.00	0.00
Water	100.00	0.00
Other	100.00	0.00

## Industrial Metals

Commodity	Value	Change
Aluminum	100.00	0.00
Copper	100.00	0.00
Lead	100.00	0.00
Nickel	100.00	0.00
Platinum	100.00	0.00
Rhodium	100.00	0.00
Silver	100.00	0.00
Tin	100.00	0.00
Zinc	100.00	0.00

## Precious Metals

Commodity	Value	Change
Gold	100.00	0.00
Silver	100.00	0.00
Platinum	100.00	0.00
Rhodium	100.00	0.00

## Agricultural

Commodity	Value	Change
Wheat	100.00	0.00
Corn	100.00	0.00
Soybeans	100.00	0.00
Cotton	100.00	0.00
Wool	100.00	0.00
Sugar	100.00	0.00
Coffee	100.00	0.00
Tea	100.00	0.00
Spices	100.00	0.00
Rubber	100.00	0.00
Latex	100.00	0.00
Timber	100.00	0.00
Paper	100.00	0.00
Textiles	100.00	0.00
Leather	100.00	0.00
Metals	100.00	0.00
Minerals	100.00	0.00
Fuels	100.00	0.00
Coal	100.00	0.00
Natural Gas	100.00	0.00
Electricity	100.00	0.00
Water	100.00	0.00
Other	100.00	0.00

## Other Softs

Commodity	Value	Change
Wheat	100.00	0.00
Corn	100.00	0.00
Soybeans	100.00	0.00
Cotton	100.00	0.00
Wool	100.00	0.00
Sugar	100.00	0.00
Coffee	100.00	0.00
Tea	100.00	0.00
Spices	100.00	0.00
Rubber	100.00	0.00
Latex	100.00	0.00
Timber	100.00	0.00
Paper	100.00	0.00
Textiles	100.00	0.00
Leather	100.00	0.00
Metals	100.00	0.00
Minerals	100.00	0.00
Fuels	100.00	0.00
Coal	100.00	0.00
Natural Gas	100.00	0.00
Electricity	100.00	0.00
Water	100.00	0.00
Other	100.00	0.00



# Godolphin delegation drops Embassy

By Richard Edmondson

THE ABSENTEE notes started to collect yesterday in advance of this weekend's Guinness meeting at Newmarket and the most notable omission will be Godolphin's Embassy from the fillies' Classic.

Last season's Cheveley Park winner has survived the aircraft food on the journey from the Emirates, but like plastic cutlery, she is to be saved for another day.

"Her progress has not been as good as we have wanted for Sunday and it would not have been fair on her to run," Simon

Crisford, Godolphin's racing manager, said yesterday. "That said, we are pleased with her. She is doing well."

The Arabian team will now be represented solely by Cape Verdi and is not exactly compromised by having just a single warrior in the contest. Cape Verdi was heavily backed once again yesterday and the former property of Robert Sangster finished trading at 7-4 (from 2-1) with Coral.

A further probable scratch from the 1,000 Guineas was Lady In Waiting. Paul Cole has been unable to exercise his filly for the last two mornings

because of her damaged foot and she now appears unlikely to attempt to translate her good gallop form to the Newmarket flatlands.

"It is looking unlikely that she will run," the Whatcombe trainer said yesterday. "She has a problem and missed work again this morning."

Cole's former inmate Central Park now seems to be Godolphin's main weapon in tomorrow's 2,000 Guineas. The colt will be steered by Frankie Dettori, while the travelling side's No 2, Almutawaj, will be left in the hands of John Carroll.

The other two Godolphin entries, Alder and Zaya, will be going through customs once again as they point at the Poule d'Essai des Poulains (French 2,000 Guineas).

**RICHARD EDMONDSON**  
NAP: Jack Robbo (Sedgefield 6.00)  
NB: Busy Flight (Newmarket 4.50)

A clue to Godolphin's strength this season, the fifth when their buccannery ships have tied up in Britain, comes this afternoon when Mutawaj is produced alongside the regally bred debutant Nassayem. They will at least have the benefit of good ground unrecognised by most garden-lenders recently in Britain.

"It was dry today and dry yesterday and the forecast is pretty encouraging for the weekend," Nick Lees, the Newmarket clerk of the course, said yesterday. "It [the forecast] is warm on Saturday and hot on Sunday, so things are looking up. There will be good ground for tomorrow and Saturday unless anything untoward happens."

This relative Suffolk desert witnesses the seasonal reappearance today of the St Leg-

er winner Silver Patriarch, whose effort (for breeding syndication purposes) to be established as the leading 12-furlong creature has been facilitated by the retirement of Peintre Celebre.

Those close to the horse inform that we will see a far more mature beast emerge from the saddling area this afternoon for the Jockey Club Stakes. It will be no easy for Silver Patriarch, however, as his opponents include more than water-bearers. The bonny Celeric is his stable's support act, while the Derby third Romanov, and the talented cou-

pling of Kingfisher Mill and Happy Valentine, will also ensure this is much more than a triumphal march.

There is a further Group contest in a Sagaro Stakes which has been kept in cold storage from Ascot's abandoned Wednesday card. There is a great favourite (if not a market favourite) here in Double Trigger, who will wrestle with the likes of Persian Punch and Busy Flight.

Today's scheduled race meeting at Newton Abbot was abandoned yesterday because the track was waterlogged.

Results, page 31

## HYPERION'S TV TIPS

**2.05 JILJA**  
3.40 Phonetic  
4.15 SUPERCAL (nap)  
4.50 Samraan  
5.20 Myzomela

**2.35** Much interest will focus here on Mutawaj, who flies the Godolphin banner. The performance of Frankie Dettori's mount could indicate the quality of the Godolphin challenge in this weekend's big events. It would be unwise, though, to ignore the claims of SENSORY. The drying ground will suit the Horris Hill Stakes runner-up.

**3.10** A fascinating clash between older horses expected to be leading lights in top middle-distance prizes this summer. Fitness at this early stage of the season may well decide which of SILVER PATRIARCH, Kingfisher Mill and Romanov takes the honours today. News from Sussex is that the first-named is in fine shape for his seasonal debut.

**3.40** Before investing in this cavalry charge it could pay to watch earlier races on this card in case the results point to where the best ground is. PHONETIC looks interesting among the high numbers. He won a 17-runner contest at Newbury 12 months ago. Of those drawn nearer the stands side, Talulah Belle is fancied to go well for Jason Weaver.

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## Newmarket 2.05

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3. Supercal	71	61	61	61
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Photograph: Allsport

IT MAY be placing a curse over a fabulous season, but this lifelong Arsenal fan has as much to say as he can about the club's prediction to make, and it terrifies him. Our club is running a serious risk of becoming the most popular in the land. Worse than that, it could even turn into a national institution. One by one, the elements are falling into place. Nick Hornby's *Fever Pitch* provides the historical chronicle, a deep trough of the emotions of an Arsenal fan at which parched newcomers may drink. Then we have the glittering present, a string of performances that has all at once rendered Manchester United, the nearest thing we presently have to a national institution, as dated — and exciting — as last week's stock prices. And then there's Arsène Wenger. But of him more in a moment.

A singularly misguided writer in the *Evening Standard* recently predicted that, come the Cup final, an orgy of old-fashioned Arsenal-hating would burst over the land, and that Newcastle would be every neutral's favourite. You do not have to be a believer to know the reverse is true — and not merely as a result of the grace, loquacity and affability of Kenny Dalglish.

Suddenly we have a team that everyone

loves. In our most euphoric moments, some of us liken its style to that of the "Total Football" Dutch sides which every uncommitted follower of football vainly prayed would win the World Cups of 1974 and 1978. For Overmars read Rensenbrink, for Bergkamp read Cruyff. No longer is Arsenal just a dreary winning machine. Forced for decades to find virtue in the long ball up the centre and the hoof into the upper deck, to our amazement we find ourselves at the vanguard of the Beautiful Game.

In truth, "Boring Arsenal" was always a bit unfair — the 1989 and 1991 Championship sides scored goals by the handful, and the brief flowering of the Liam Brady/Frank Stapleton team of the late 1970s, cut short by Brady's defection to Juventus which even 18 years later still rankles, remains a golden memory. But, yes, it can't be disputed: by and large we were pretty dull, and in the late 50s, mid 60s and mid 80s we sometimes bordered on the awful. But vilification bred fierce clan loyalty. Now, lo and behold, we risk becoming a by-

word for sophistication and charm. For long time pilgrims to London NS, this transformation is seriously disorienting.

For despite the Johnnie-Come-Latelies who always hitch their allegiance to a rolling bandwagon, Arsenal's fan base probably hasn't greatly changed. Yes, football's gentrified and ultra-fashionable, and restaurants are replacing pubs as gathering places for the faithful. Yet, the sport has a rich history following, but then there always was. Residents complain of sieges by limo on Saturday afternoons — but some of my first forays to Highbury were in walnut-panelled Daimlers (which my father would insist on driving, with the windows sealed as he puffed on a cigar of Churchillian dimensions). But let the flash Harrys go to Chelsea. At heart Arsenal is still the neighbourhood team. Newcastle has Tony Blair, Blackburn has Jack Straw, and Tottenham in the Glory, Glory Hallelujah days had Freddie Ayer. I have called around to check, but the best anyone can come up with for Arsenal in the celebrity supporter stakes is Melvyn Bragg.

And the terrace poetry hasn't improved much either. These days, *grace* d'Arné, the verses have a more cosmopolitan flavour: "He comes from Senegal-AL, he plays for Arsenal-AL," for instance, in honour of Patrick Vieira, these days the North Bank's supreme favourite; or "He's blond, he's quick, he's named after a porno flick," eulogizing Emmanuel Petit, the other French titan of the midfield. The subject matter may be more ambitious, but in terms of scansion not a patch on "Six foot two and eyes of blue, Willie Young is after you," the chant in honour of the lumbering Scottish defender of blessed memory, responsible for the odd mazy dribble and one or two of the most thunderous own goals in Arsenal history (among them a header in the Manchester United game of April 1, 1978, that left Pat Jennings frozen as a statue), or, going back even further, "Bertie Mc said to Bill ShankLEE, Have you heard of the North Bank, 'IghbuREE..."

And then there's Arsène. Even after his 1971 double, Bertie Mc never acquired a

fraction of the star quality radiating from Wenger before the possible repeat of 1998. What is it about these Frenchmen that so bewitch us? What came of our national contempt for the "bottomless superficiality" of the ancient foe from across the Channel? First, Eric Cantona, the thinking man's footballer — artist, actor and poet on the side. Now Wenger, mysterious and cooler than Cool Britannia could ever dream of, who turns the post-match press conference into a Cartesian dissection of the footballing universe.

Did I detect an "over ze moon"/the other day? Maybe, but the gallic lilt of the studious, unfailingly polite Wenger, occasionally to be found in post-match rumination in a local restaurant, can turn Gaffer-speak into Racine. Small wonder the reporters feel like pupils at the feet of the master. So welcome to the new Arsenal, multi-national, multi-faceted, the blending of the best of British with the best of Europe. Isn't this what Blairism's all about? And, with New Labour's nose for a vote-winner, I can't believe our Prime Minister (lately of North London moreover), will be supporting Newcastle for long after 16 May. Thus will cult-status be sealed. Whether that's what I want is quite another matter.

**Brazil** 0  
**Argentina** 1

**CLAUDIO LOPEZ** punctured Brazilian morale as they prepare to defend the World Cup by scoring the only goal in the 84th minute of a prestige friendly at Rio de Janeiro's Maracana stadium on Wednesday.

Brazil's coach, Mario Zagallo, conceded: "The team did not play to my satisfaction and we must improve for France. Argentina also played poorly, but they had much better rhythm, which is very important."

In the early stages, Argentina seemed better organised, keeping the ball in Brazil's half for the first few minutes. But as the game progressed Brazil picked up steam, with the formidable pairing of Ronaldo and Romario taking on and beating defenders with ease.

Argentina hit back, with Gabriel Batistuta breaking into the penalty area in the 27th minute, but he sliced his shot wide. Minutes later, Nelson Vivas's effort from outside the area flew straight at Brazil's

goalkeeper, Claudio Taffarel.

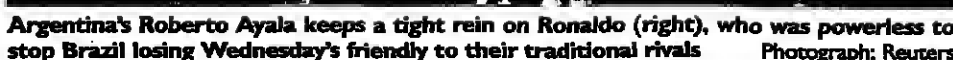
Then Roberto Ayala earned himself a yellow card for fouling Ronaldo, who almost exacted revenge with a long-range effort which was off target. Lopez went much closer: seconds later, sending the ball inches wide of the post.

Denilson was also close to opening the scoring when he extended the Argentine keeper German Burgos, who was relieved to see the midfielder's shot drift narrowly wide.

The second half began with a series of the physical confrontations which have characterized matches between these two great rivals, and Roberto Carlos was fortunate not to concede a penalty when he knocked over Argentina's playmaker Ariel Ortega in the area.

The Brazilian full-back had a chance to show off his own dead-ball expertise when Ronaldo was fouled, but the free-kick flew straight into the wall.

The home crowd started to get impatient and began chanting "Edmundo" — as if the Fiorentina striker could set



Photograph: Reuters

things straight. Zagallo thought so too because Edmundo soon went on for Denilson.

Argentina were looking more dangerous and, after Ze Elias had fired a long-range effort straight into Burgos's arms, on the counter-attack Juan Veron's strike bounced out of Taffarel's grasp and the loose ball evaded Argentina's on-

Lopez then took over, setting his sights with a shot straight at Taffarel before he cut in from

the wing and beat the veteran keeper with only six minutes left.

Romario and Ronaldo both created openings in the closing moments, but Argentina held on for a morale-boosting victory.

**Brazil:** Taffarel, Cely, Junior Baiano (Cleber, 84) Aides, Roberto Carlos, Cesar Sampaio, Ze Siqueira, (Leonardo, 67), Denilson (Edmundo, 68), Romario, Romario.

**Argentina:** Burgos, Vives, Sorcinelli, Ayala, Zanetti, Almada, Simone, Veron, Orsato (Dagostini, 75), Lopez (Pfeiffer, 88), Battistuta.

THE Football League has pleaded for sanity and good behaviour from fans at Sunday's Nationwide League climax.

Fears of crowd problems at the relegation clash between Stoke and Manchester City and promotion-chasing Sunderland's visit to Swindon have prompted the League to beg supporters not to wreck English football's improved image in the eyes of the sporting world.

The League has reacted following worrying problems emerging from the Stoke game — where both sides could be relegated on Sunday — that Manchester City fans have bought up thousands of tickets for areas of the Britannia Stadium normally reserved for home fans.

Stoke believe as many as 3,000 City supporters could be in areas of the ground normally reserved for home fans, although even this estimate could be a conservative one.

It is feared that in the

28,000-capacity stadium as many as 10,000 City fans have acquired tickets.

There are also reports that Sunderland supporters have acquired many tickets in the home support areas of the County Ground.

A League spokesman, Chris Hull, said: "We are obviously unable to become involved in the ticket arrangements of individual clubs but we are aware of the possible problems at Stoke. We have to rely on the clubs involved to organise their games in the best way possible and ask fans to behave themselves."

Stoke have decided to bring in 200 extra stewards and 250 police officers for a game that is potentially explosive. Manchester City were given 4,800 tickets for one end of the ground and sold their allocation inside two days. But Stoke have been accepting telephone bookings and put tickets for the other three sides of the ground on open sale.

## Football results

[illegible]

## Non-League notebook

**By Rupert Metcalf**

WHEN the former Stoke City and England full-back, Mike Pejic, took over as manager of Leek Town three weeks ago, he knew he faced a tough task - but not this tough.

When the GM Vauxhall Conference season concludes tomorrow, Leek will have played six games in eight days. These are not meaningless matches, either, for they need points to secure relegation.

Caused by four games being postponed during April, Leak's eight days of exertion started with last Saturday's home defeat by Welling. Then it was off to Stevenage on Monday, followed by another away game at Slough on Tuesday. Last night they were at home to Yeovil, while tonight Morecambe are the visitors to Harrison Park. Tomorrow the Staffordshire side's exhausted players will have to drag themselves back down to the Home Counties again for the final fixture, at Hayes.

"I read about Arsenal find-

ing it tough with five games in 17 days, and I wasn't very sympathetic," Pejic said. "And they're full-time pros — all our lads are part-timers." Work commitments meant that Leek had to do without two key players, Neil Ellis and Dean Trott, for the two away games on Monday and Tuesday.

Pejic's selection problems have been exacerbated by two bad injuries: against a physical Wellerside last weekend John Diskin suffered a broken leg and Dale Hawtin a fractured elbow. The situation is so bad that a

Slough on Tuesday Pejic had to put three players he had never seen play on the substitutes' bench.

On Wednesday he spent this week's only spare evening scouting for new recruits. "This wasn't really what I was expecting," a weary Pejic said.

*Emley* hit the headlines with their brave display at West Ham in the FA Cup in January, but they were in the news for the wrong reasons after their 3-0 win over Parkgate in the Sheffield Senior Cup final at Hillsborough on Tuesday.

After Dean Calcutt had been sent off for throwing the ball at an opponent following the final whistle, another Emley player, Simon Jones, who had been substituted, confronted the referee. He was restrained by a teammate, Neil Lacey (a policeman), who became involved in a fight with Jones.

Ian Banks, Emley's captain, refused to collect the trophy in disgust at what was happening, and the evening ended with Jones - sent off three times and booked 13 times this season - being sacked by the club.

## Drugs in sport

**FINA, swimming's world governing body, is to press ahead with investigations into Ireland's triple Olympic champion, Michelle de Bruin, despite her strong denials that she tampered with a sample.**

Fina and the De Bruin camp are awaiting results of the B sample, the second one given by the former Michelle Smith in January. She is accused of having taken advantage of a banned procedure, of using a banned substance, and actions which affected the integrity and validity of the urine sample.

The International Olympic Committee has also entered the row, saying a urine sample submitted by De Bruin contained deadly levels of alcohol with "a very strong whisky odour".

The IOC medical commission chairman, Prince Alexandre de Merode, confirmed yesterday that unnaturally high levels of alcohol had been found in the sample.

"The alcohol level was so high that you could not survive with that concentration," he said, adding that it was possible that either it "is not her urine or that it's manipulated urine" and that alcohol could be used to mask the presence of other drugs in a sample. He said two drug testers, a man and a woman, were present for De Bruin's doping control.

Meanwhile a senior European athletics coach gave his support to De Bruin and accused the sport of sour grapes.

David McCreanney, who coaches in Belgium, saw De Bruin train for four months before the Atlanta Games. He said: "Michelle ate, worked and slept training under the guidance of her husband Erik. She would swim all morning, sleep in the afternoon and train again in the evening. She got there through a lot of hard work and structured training."

Meanwhile, it was claimed yesterday that around 70 percent of top-class sportsmen are cheating with drugs. Matthew Yates, a former European 1,500m indoor champion, and Britain's former 400m runner Derek Redmond, said they believed most athletes who appeared in a final at the top level were taking banned substances.

Yates made his claim in a debate about drugs in sport on BBC radio and Redmond added: "I have heard the 70 per cent figure and I wouldn't be surprised. It is going on in the world of athletics."

## Cycling

**By Robin Nicholl**

**NINE** years ago, Colin Sturgess was a world track champion. Today he races in the Travelwise four-day Tour of Lancashire with some catching up to do after studying for a university degree, emigrating to Australia and editing a cycling magazine.

Having put his professional racing career on hold in 1993, Sturgess, a former British road race champion, got back on a bike while covering the world track championships in Perth, Western Australia. Then his South African protégé, David George, won an under-23 world time trial bronze in San Sebastian, and Sturgess was fired up for a comeback. After a medal-winning performance in the Australian track championships, Sturgess returned to Britain to re-establish his international career at the age of 29.

He was due to ride in a French race but the trip fell through, so Sturgess was switched to the 260-mile Tour which opens today on a Peak District circuit, near Oldham.

Another late inclusion is Jeremy Hunt, whose 10 victories last year in internationally recognised races put him among the top nine most successful riders of the year.

**TOUR OF LANCASHIRE:** Today: Lydgate-perennial circuit, Oldham, 59.5 miles (start 4pm). Tomorrow: Bolton-Holcombe, 73.5 miles (10.30am). Sunday: Cockerham time trials, Lancaster, 12 miles (9.00am); Hyndburn circuit race (Agricultural town centre), 29.8 miles (8.30am); Monday: Lancaster-Ellistown



# 'Unconstitutional' suspension of clubs leads to confusion

## Rugby Union

By Chris Hewett

VERNON PUGH and Rob Fisher, two of the four International Rugby Board big wheels who earlier this week cast England's leading Premiership clubs into temporary exile, come from legal backgrounds. All the more peculiar, then, that they should have acted outside the strict terms

and conditions of their own organisation's constitution.

Pugh, a barrister and Crown Court recorder as well as the current chairman of the IRB, was instrumental in issuing the threat of impending disciplinary action against the Rugby Football Union, whose four-man negotiating panel has completed peace talks with representatives of English First Division Rugby, the clubs' umbrella organisation.

Pugh has been angered and alarmed by the clubs' impetuous decision to challenge some of the more draconian board regulations in an application to the European Commission, which will be heard in October.

Fisher, a New Zealand lawyer, and two fellow executive members, Tim Kieran of Ireland and Dick McGruther of Australia, were also involved in the ad hoc discussion that resulted in Tuesday's provocative

statement. The four men announced that all 82 of the IRB's member unions, from Andorra in Zimbabwe, had been told to suspend playing contact with the EFDR clubs with immediate effect.

Yet the board's own constitution clearly states under regulation three (pithily subtitled "Compliance with regulations and procedures in respect of breaches") that the IRB must give a union "proper opportunity

to make representations to the council" before disciplining the union's clubs. The RFU will not get that opportunity until 18 May, when it attends a special meeting in Dublin.

Senior club activists suspect Pugh and company of sabre rattling in an effort to undermine the RFU-EDFR negotiations, the fruits of which will be discussed by the union's management board next week.

If the agreement is ratified,

the IRB will find itself in the intriguing position of throwing the book at Twickenham officials for their role in ending an internal conflict that has ravaged English rugby for more than two years.

It was by no means clear yesterday whether the action taken against the EFDR clubs would affect the Sanyo Cup showpiece, which is scheduled for 23 May and involves a big-name invitation side from every

corner of the rugby world taking on the winners of the Allied Dunbar Premiership.

Neither was there an official line on where the ban might leave this summer's southern hemisphere tours. England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales are all on the road over the next two months and will rely on players from the EFDR clubs.

It was left to Gareth Davies, the chief executive of a Cardiff club in deep dispute with the

Welsh Rugby Union, to lead the attack on the IRB initiative yesterday. "Why pick on England?" he asked. "We should look a bit nearer home. Professional rugby in Wales is a complete disaster, a total shambles."

"England's problems are more complex than ours, but look at what they've achieved already. As an outsider, I would say that England and the clubs are doing all right."

## Clarke revels in tough new role

ON HIS way for lunch this week, Phil Clarke spots a street trader selling Wigan memorabilia and moves across in cover of defence much as he used to as a back-row forward.

He tackles him with a couple of questions, polite but firm. Is this official merchandise? Does he have a licence to sell it?

The evasive skills are good. It depends what you mean by "official" or by "licence," grr, and the name Wigan Warriors is not a registered trade-mark.

Lunch will have to wait for a phone call to the club, telling them that, if it isn't registered, they must get about making it so right away. Life as a chief executive is a lot more complex than life as a player.

The last time Wigan played at Wembley, three years ago, Clarke was at loose forward for the last of his five winners' medals. Although he is still not 27, he will be sitting tomorrow with the old men behind the Royal Box, as an ex-player—one whose career was ended prematurely by a broken neck—and the brightest and busiest young administrator in the game.

It would be a difficult and painful transition for most people, but not, Clarke insists, for him. "I'm not a frustrated player any more. I don't want to run down the role of players, but I'm beyond that stage now. What I'm doing now represents my future."

When he does look back, he finds Cup finals do not really rank among the most vivid memories of his time with the club.

"I'm hoping to enjoy Wembley more this time. In all my time at Wigan, there are six games or so that really stand out and those were the ones we weren't supposed to win, like the World Club Championship in Brisbane. I got a special feeling playing for Great Britain when we beat Australia at Wembley, but in Cup finals we were always expected to win, so the main feeling was being anxious about losing," he said.

"I used to see players punching the air when we'd won and wonder what they were doing

The back-row forward turned Wigan chief executive tells Dave Hadfield how he is making the Challenge Cup finals more business-like

that for. They were games we should win. If that sense of everything coming too easily was what drove Clarke to leave for the Sydney City Roosters, then he is finding all the challenges he needs in his new role at his old club.

The weeks since he took the job have been made up of long working days, raising standards that had slumped alarmingly right across the club. He never misses an Alliance or Academy game. "Because I might have to decide whether to keep them or release them," he said.

To those young players, he is the boss, although one with a dis-

tinguished playing record. To many of the first team squad, he is a contemporary and friend who must now keep his distance.

"I don't spend much time hanging around the changing rooms. That's not my place any more. And you don't have many friends in management; it's a lonely job."

Lonely and fraught with thorny problems. Had the timing and finance fallen differently, for instance, one of his first duties would have been to tell his closest mate from his playing days, Denis Betts, that the club could not afford to pay him.

There are other unpalatable tidings he has had to con-

vey. Various functions have been told that, if Wigan win tomorrow, they must not join the team for the post-match pictures. When Clarke and his team-mates won in 1995, they were outnumbered on the photos by men in blazers; it rained then, so he will not allow it now.

For an archetypal Mr Nice Guy, Clarke does not shy away from confrontation. Doggy street vendors aside, he has ruffled feathers by telling the club's apprentices that they should have jobs and college courses on their timetables and not expect to be full-time professionals from their teens onward. "They were hanging around the club doing nothing. They aren't all going to make it, so telling them to have something else in their lives is being cruel to be kind," he said.

There have also been differences of opinion with some with a lot more clout at the club and arguments that make it just as well that he seems to have the unstinting support of Wigan's bankroller, Dave Whelan.

Clarke also caused alarm when he was quoted as saying that Wigan might one day be playing rugby union. "What I meant there was that a business has to look at all options," he said. "McDonald's were asked what they would do in the next century, if no one wants burgers and fries. They said they would sell people what they do want. But sport isn't like selling fries. It's not just a business; there's so much tradition and feeling involved and our game's so good."

Therein lies something of a quandary. Clarke and the staff at Wigan are working hard to make the club the dominant force in the game again. But if they become too dominant it makes the sport a less viable proposition.

It is something else to ponder from the post seats at Wembley. And, afterwards, he will be staying out of the pictures.



Clarke in action for Wigan  
Photograph: Simon Wilkinson



Phil Clarke, Wigan's chief executive, is fearless in confrontations in his new job

## Sponsors provide timely lift

By Dave Hadfield

THE Challenge Cup's sponsors yesterday showed confidence in the competition's future by extending their backing into the next millennium. Now the hope is that the game's supporters will rally round tomorrow to prevent Wembley being embarrassed by empty for this year's final.

Silk Cut, who have sponsored the Cup for 14 years, have added another two years to their current deal, which is due to end after next season's final.

In 2001, their support will amount to the sport's first £1m sponsorship for a season and is a valuable vote of confidence on the eve of what could be

Wembley's worst-attended final for over 50 years.

Sheffield Eagles, for all their progress on the field, have not built up their support correspondingly and have returned half of their ticket allocation of 14,000.

That means, even with a good walk-up attendance on the day, the gate is unlikely to top 65,000, which would make it the smallest since 54,730 watched Wakefield Trinity play this season's hot favourites, Wigan, in 1946.

Part of the problem is that few expect the match to be an evenly-balanced contest, with the Eagles given little or no chance of victory.

Castleford are to hold talks aimed at keeping their coach, Stuart Raper, with them beyond the expiry of his contract at the end of this season.

Raper, who steered Cas away from relegation last season, has been linked with his old club, Cronulla, whose coach, John Lang, is expected to join Sydney City next year.

The French government has agreed to set up an inquiry into claims by the new pressure group, XIII-Actif, that Rugby League's assets were stolen by the Vichy regime.

The group is campaigning for the restitution of funds that were confiscated during World War II.

## Brown and Russell state their case

### Cricket

By Mark Baldwin  
at The Oval

Gloucestershire 266-7  
Surrey 270-3  
Surrey win by seven wickets

THE England chairman of selectors, David Graveney, yesterday saw the best of both Alistair Brown and Jack Russell — two men desperate after their winter experiences to prove they should not be forgotten.

One-day maestro Brown finished on the winning side in the Benson and Hedges Cup tie, largely thanks to his own 74 from just 68 balls.

Wicketkeeper Russell had earlier made 83 in Gloucestershire's 266 for 7, a challenging total made to look almost ridiculously puny — even in gloomy, chilly conditions.

Brown was the only member of England's triumphant team at Sharjah last December to be dropped for the one-day series in the West Indies which concluded the unhappy winter tour.

Russell, after a wretched Test tour of the Caribbean with both bat and gloves, has spent the last fortnight reading about how Graveney's panel intend to restore Stewart as England's full-time wicketkeeper.

Today he was prompted by his county in three in an attempt to disrupt the line of Surrey's new ball attack.

Russell, squinting and swatting in his idiosyncratic style, looked back in his best as he put on 96 with the stylish Rob Cunniff and then spiritedly stayed to fulfil the anchor role in a well-paced 129-ball effort.

Gloucestershire plundered 90 runs from their last 10 overs, but in reply the intimidating opening partnership of Brown and Alec Stewart set off at a rate of seven runs an over.

Brown thrashed three sixes off Jon Lewis and five fours to open his case for inclusion in the Texaco Trophy squad to face South Africa. When he departed at 152, Graham Thorpe saw Surrey almost across the finishing line with a brilliant 85 off 105 balls.

## Somerset survive

By Derrick Whyte  
at Taunton

British Universities 127-6  
Somerset 130-8  
Somerset won by two wickets

SOMERSET survived an astonishing collapse to beat the British Universities by two wickets in the Benson and Hedges Cup here yesterday. A wet outfield delayed the start until 3.45pm when the students, put in to bat, went on to make 127 for 6 in their 20 overs.

After opener Simon Ecclestone was run out for a duck, Somerset appeared to be cruising to victory as Mike Burns and Graham Rose shared a second wicket stand of 98 runs in 11 overs. But the scene changed dramatically when seven wickets tumbled for 21 runs, six of them shared by leg spinner Greg Loveridge and medium pacer Michael Davies.

Somerset almost became 122 for 9, but James Lawrence

dropped a difficult caught and bowled chance offered by Adrian Pierson. In the end, Pierson and Somerset coach Dermot Reeve, in his comeback game after injury, guided Somerset home with one over remaining.

Burns took the Gold Award for his 42-ball innings of 55, which included seven fours and a six.

An unbeaten 46 by Mark Chifum had earlier led the Universities to a respectable total. Sussex's James Pymment, the schoolboy cricketer of the year in 1996, weighed in with 25 before Marcus Trescothick yanked him with a slower delivery.

Trescothick also had Will House caught behind as he finished as Somerset's most successful bowler with 2 for 20 in his four overs. England paceman Andrew Caddick could also be satisfied with his 2 for 25, as he accounted for Universities captain Anurag Singh and Loveridge who played one Test for New Zealand two years ago.

### Sporting digest

**Baseball**  
AMERICAN LEAGUE: Boston 4 Anaheim 4; Texas 4 Detroit 1; Kansas City 7 Toronto 2; Cleveland 10 Chicago 1; New York Yankees 8 Seattle 2; Chicago White Sox 9 Baltimore 7; Minnesota 2 Tampa Bay 0.

**NATIONAL LEAGUE**: Cincinnati 1 Philadelphia 0; St Louis 10 Montreal 7; Houston 8 New York Mets 1.

**Basketball**  
NBA PLAY-OFFS First round (all series best of five): Eastern Conference: Chicago 10 New Jersey 9; Detroit 10 Cleveland 9; Indiana 10 Orlando 9; San Antonio 10 Phoenix 9; Los Angeles 10 Sacramento 9; Seattle 10 Utah 10 (Western Conference: Los Angeles 10 Portland 9; San Antonio 10 Phoenix 9; Dallas 10 Houston 9; Minnesota 10 New York 9; Utah 10 Sacramento 9; Seattle 10).

**Cricket**  
Ireland return to captaincy when he leads an MCC side against a Rest of the World XI in the Memorial match at Lords this Wednesday. Atherton will lead a side against the MCC in the 50-over match on Saturday 10 July.

Malaysia plans to stage a four-nation tournament before the Commonwealth Games in September, the Malaysian Cricket Association announced yesterday. The MCA president, Imran Tahir, said the tournament was likely to be held in July to coincide with the World Super 8 tournament.

name to test the competition venues and tournament officials. "By that time, all eight venues for the Commonwealth Games should be ready," he said.

**Cycling**  
CONTOUR DEL TRENTINO RACE Fourth stage (168 km, Turin del Brennero to Riva del Garda): 1. P. F. (Swi) 2. P. F. (Swi) 3. P. F. (Swi) 4. P. F. (Swi) 5. P. F. (Swi) 6. P. F. (Swi) 7. P. F. (Swi) 8. P. F. (Swi) 9. P. F. (Swi) 10. P. F. (Swi) 11. P. F. (Swi) 12. P. F. (Swi) 13. P. F. (Swi) 14. P. F. (Swi) 15. P. F. (Swi) 16. P. F. (Swi) 17. P. F. (Swi) 18. P. F. (Swi) 19. P. F. (Swi) 20. P. F. (Swi) 21. P. F. (Swi) 22. P. F. (Swi) 23. P. F. (Swi) 24. P. F. (Swi) 25. P. F. (Swi) 26. P. F. (Swi) 27. P. F. (Swi) 28. P. F. (Swi) 29. P. F. (Swi) 30. P. F. (Swi) 31. P. F. (Swi) 32. P. F. (Swi) 33. P. F. (Swi) 34. P. F. (Swi) 35. P. F. (Swi) 36. P. F. (Swi) 37. P. F. (Swi) 38. P. F. (Swi) 39. P. F. (Swi) 40. P. F. (Swi) 41. P. F. (Swi) 42. P. F. (Swi) 43. P. F. (Swi) 44. P. F. (Swi) 45. P. F. (Swi) 46. P. F. (Swi) 47. P. F. (Swi) 48. P. F. (Swi) 49. P. F. (Swi) 50. P. F. (Swi) 51. P. F. (Swi) 52. P. F. (Swi) 53. P. F. (Swi) 54. P. F. (Swi) 55. P. F. (Swi) 56. P. F. (Swi) 57. P. F. (Swi) 58. P. F. 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# Laid-back approach keeps Doherty on course

## Snooker

By Guy Hodgson  
at The Crucible, Sheffield

KEN DOHERTY says he is under pressure but you would be hard put to find evidence of it. Like David Gower, who looked as though batting was merely an extension to his social whirl, he has been playing at the Embassy World Championship as if an enemy's life depended on it.

Successfully, too, because he established a 6-2 lead in his semi-final against Mark Williams yesterday and is seriously threatening to follow up last year's win with an appearance in the final. He requires 11 frames over three sessions today and tomorrow.

His sang-froid, he maintains, is because he has achieved his life's ambition. He wanted to be world champion and instead of worrying about remaining there he is determined to enjoy the experience no matter how temporary it is. "I've come with the same cavalier

attitude I had last year," he said, "and if it happens again it happens, but if it doesn't it'll still have been a great year."

There are many sportsmen who proclaim to be relaxed who act on the field of play as if they are trying to get a part as the T Rex in *Jurassic Park*, but Doherty is not one of them. That was evident in his second frame yesterday.

Doherty was just launching himself into a break when a disturbance broke out in the crowd. A silver-haired man,

who was probably as sober as a judge but gave the impression he could give news a lesson in drinking, suddenly got up and, seemingly oblivious to the chaos he was causing, tripped over the people next to him.

Colin Montgomerie would have given him a stare worthy of Medusa if someone had done that while he was over a putt, while Seve Ballesteros would still be rotting in jail for his retribution, but Doherty merely broke off from his stroke, looked up and smiled at

the incongruity of the situation. There is only a first prize of £220,000 at stake, after all.

"I'm not playing as well as last year," Doherty said. "I've struggled in all three games, performing only in patches. But I feel more complete this year than I have in previous seasons even if I'm not firing on all cylinders. In different ways I am better. I'm tougher, harder to beat."

"Getting through that pain barrier last year is important. You've won on the big stage, you

know it's there and you just have to wait for it to come out."

It emerged with a flourish yesterday, Doherty beginning with a break of 42 and 45 for the first frame and then winning safely exchanges for a 3-1 lead. The fifth frames and eighth frames were pivotal, however, as Williams missed chances to seal them - and the champion swooped.

In the former Doherty had to clear the colours to take it to a re-spotted black, which he potted when Williams went for glory with a long shot and the latter

was sealed with two snookers and a break of 25 after the challenger missed a relatively easy yellow into a corner pocket. It will be a long way back for the man from Cwm, Wales, now.

"To use an old cliché," Doherty said, "I'm taking each session as it comes. There's still an awfully long way to go in the match, and Mark is a dangerous opponent, but naturally I'm delighted with the start I've made."

Nevertheless, Williams will have been glad to meet an opponent who did not get up his

nose quite like Peter Ebdon did in the quarter-finals. "A pain in the neck," was among the descriptions he used for his beaten opponent, because he objected to the over-enthusiastic celebrations when he won an early tight frame.

"I laughed when he did that," Williams said. "I couldn't see why you'd react like that at that stage. He was so slow in the first session it was boring and some of the crowd walked out."

Christmas cards are unlikely to be exchanged.

# Shearer: 'I did not kick Neil Lennon'

## Football

By Adam Szreter

ALAN SHEARER, the England captain, yesterday attempted to play down the latest incident in a season dogged by controversy by insisting that he did not intend to kick Leicester City's Neil Lennon in the face during Wednesday night's goalless draw with Newcastle United, despite television evidence to the contrary.

However, with less than six weeks to go to the start of the World Cup, questions are inevitably being asked about Shearer's frame of mind as he fights to ensure Newcastle United's Premiership survival while gearing himself up for the biggest test of his life in France.

Shearer escaped immediate punishment at Filbert Street as referee Martin Bodenham and his assistant apparently missed the touchline fracas, but Shearer may still face disciplinary action by the Football Association. Any suspension would not be enforceable for two weeks, so unless a ban is imposed tomorrow Shearer will still be eligible for the FA Cup final between Newcastle and Arsenal on 16 May.

"We're waiting to receive the match official's report before we decide what to do," the FA spokesman, Steve Double, said. "At this stage what course of action we take is totally dependent on that." The referee seems unlikely to report an incident over which he took no action, but despite the spokesman's comments, the FA is still entitled to react to video evidence.

"I have now seen the television pictures of the incident and

I am amazed how bad it looks by comparison to what actually happened," Shearer said yesterday. "I was brought down by Neil Lennon over by the touchline and we both fell clumsily. As I tried to get to my feet I had to really tug my left foot free and the momentum of doing this looked on television like a kick."

"It certainly wasn't and the fact that Neil is virtually unmarked confirms this. If I did accidentally catch him, I certainly did not mean to. I would never try and deliberately hurt a fellow professional."

Shearer has been beset by problems on and off the field during a season in which his model-professional "Mary Poppins" image has gradually given way to a more cynical and childish approach. "I don't care whether you are Alan Shearer, or The Pope, you don't do things like that," the Leicester manager, Martin O'Neill, said after Wednesday's game.

His Newcastle counterpart, Kenny Dalglish, defended his £15m striker: "The two of them just fell. Lennon pulled him, Shearer swung round and the momentum took him over. There was no malice, no intent as far as I know. I've never seen him do anything to deliberately hurt or injure a player. He is competitive, but not like that."

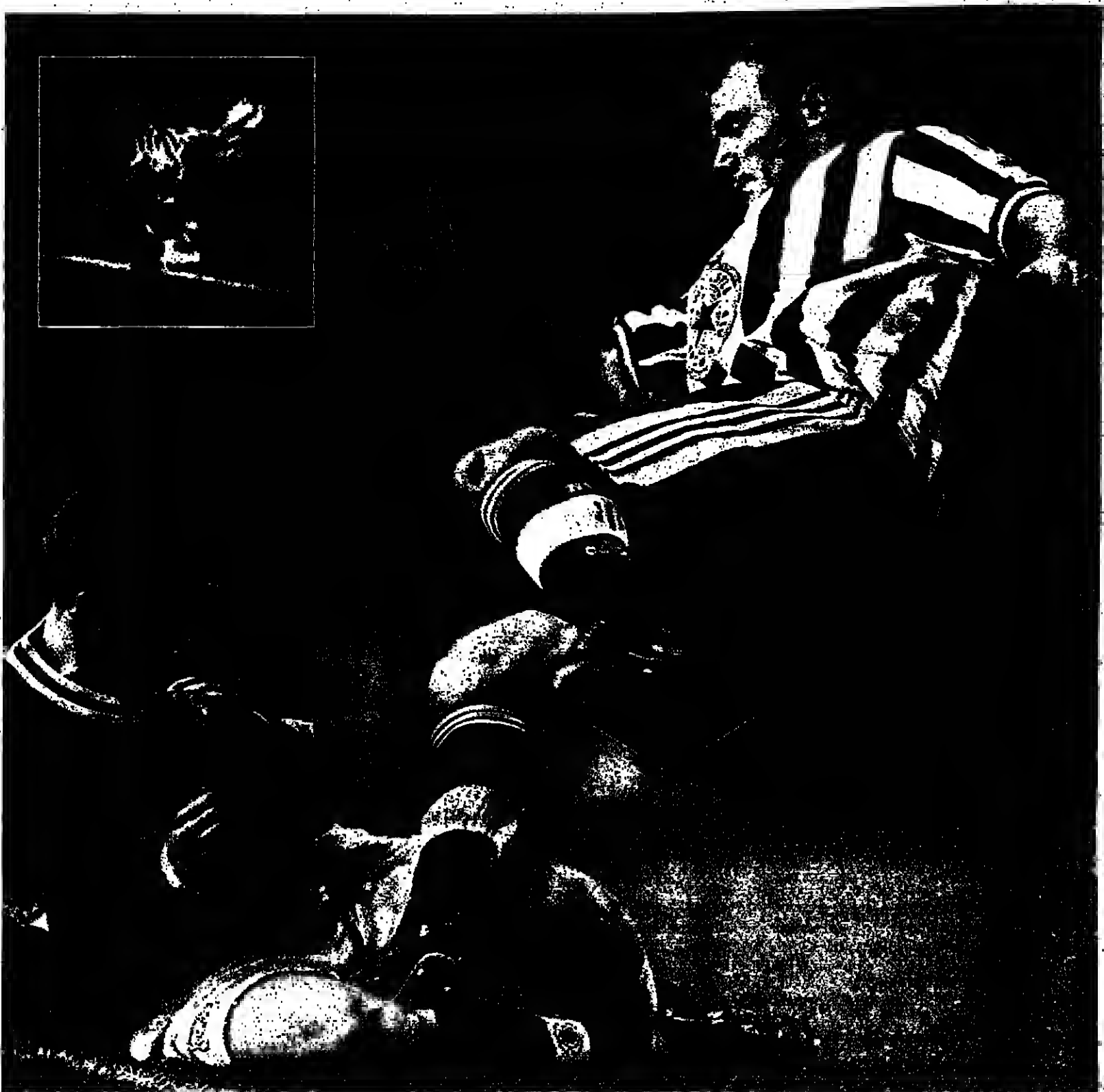
However, last Saturday, Shearer was accused by Tottenham's David Ginola of setting out to persistently foul the former Newcastle winger in the relegation match at White Hart Lane, and yesterday the Spurs manager, Christian Gross, claimed Shearer had broken the nose of Tottenham's Ramon Vega with his elbow in the second minute of the game.

A knee injury in a pre-season tournament kept Shearer out of action until January of this year, but soon after his return he became embroiled in a bitter verbal battle with players of non-League Stevenage Borough during the fourth-round FA Cup tie with Newcastle. Three weeks later he incurred the wrath of the Leeds manager, George Graham, who said: "When Shearer marked [Jimmy-Floyd] Hasselbaink at corners it was almost like assault." A fortnight later Barnsley's Danny Wilson was complaining after defender Adie Moses was sent off for two fouls on Shearer: "I don't know how Shearer gets away with some of the things he does," Wilson said.

"It's not the first time he's been criticised and not the first time the criticism has been wrong," Dalglish added. "If you go through the video against Barnsley you will see that every tackle on him was a foul. Moses was unlucky to be sent off but it was not Alan who was dictating what happened. He doesn't hand out the punishment. He only wants to be treated as an equal. He doesn't want preferential treatment, but he doesn't want to be punished because of who he is."

In between times there was an alleged punch-up with his own team-mate Keith Gillespie outside a Dublin pub, but Shearer returned to England duty last month with two goals against Portugal at Wembley, underlining his importance to the side.

England supporters will be hoping that Shearer's renowned single-mindedness will enable him to ignore distractions. Glenn Hoddle will be hoping so too. *Loveable Arsenal, page 30*



A video camera (top left) captures Alan Shearer's controversial collision with Neil Lennon at Filbert Street on Wednesday night. The England captain, despite apparent evidence to the contrary, denies kicking the Leicester player. Photograph: Raymonds

# Bergkamp in battle to be fit for Cup final

By Mark Burton

DENNIS BERGKAMP could be out until the FA Cup final because of his hamstring trouble - but the Dutchman's loss looks like being Ian Wright's gain.

Bergkamp has already been having ice treatment on the injury. Arsenal's manager, Arsène Wenger, said that in a couple of days' time it should be easier to judge if the Dutchman, who picked up the problem by overstretching during Wednesday's victory over Derby, has a chance of being fit in time to face Newcastle at Wembley on 16 May.

Wright, out for four months out with a similar injury, is gearing up to make his return

to action against Everton on Sunday, when Arsenal's could clinch the Premiership title. If the club's record-breaking striker is given the chance to add to his 12 goals in nine previous games against the Merseysiders, it would provide a boost to his chance of going to the World Cup finals with England.

Gianfranco Zola could miss Chelsea's European Cup-Winners' Cup final against Stuttgart in Stockholm on 13 May. The striker is in his native Italy hoping a trusted medical specialist can make him fit in time for the final, after he damaged a groin muscle during last Saturday's 4-1 win over Liverpool.

Bryan Robson wants to bring

Stuart Ripley home to Middlesbrough from Blackburn in a £1.5m summer transfer. Ripley has dropped out of Blackburn's first team, having earlier been in the England squad.

Steve McManaman is to be left out of Liverpool's team for the first time this season when they play West Ham at Anfield, on Saturday, because of a niggling ankle problem.

Shane Nicholson is to appeal against his sacking by West Bromwich following his admission that he had been a frequent user of amphetamines for several years. On Tuesday, Nicholson was ordered by the Football Association to attend a rehabilitation programme.

**THE INDEPENDENT CROSSWORD**  
No. 3599, Friday 1 May By Mass Thursday's solution

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**ACROSS**

- Damage excellent unit (6)
- Clear-cut remedy (8)
- Prompt has copy covering beginner in theatre (9)
- Fenced with the Parisian in protective wear (5)
- Revolutionary piece gets spoken about (7)
- Available now, or forthcoming? (2,5)
- Shakespeare naturally provides for theatre (5)
- Devilish mate, sacrificing queen, is hard to follow (8)
- Last entertainer's imbued with waggish mind (8)
- Most of spread includes joint and drink (5)
- A stock formality (7)
- Shelves packed with recipe books (7)
- Young chap, accepting church, is fortified (5)
- Unusual amount of cash invested in City, endless stack (9)
- Army group made up of rum tykes (8)
- Little bird book of a sentimental kind? (6)
- False diamond is form of alloy (8)
- Easily broken down by real FBI grilling (7)
- Pursue wagon turning up into walled area (9)
- He'll be swearing next! (9,5)
- Better bridge players will make points (5)
- Issues absorbing the European academics (7)
- A touching individual (6)
- The kind of listener associated with 'The Ring'? (11,3)
- A period including Eastern state's decline (9)
- Mow down (and stack) a field of hay, perhaps (8)
- Bees arranged by trendy parties (7)
- Hearten a revolutionary with unqualified rising (5,2)
- English learner entering stiff exam (6)
- Game opener's out, getting top edge (5)

# Walker leaves Carrow Road

MIKE WALKER was a sad man after his second spell in charge at Norwich City came to an end yesterday.

The former Everton manager left the struggling First Division club, which he once took into Europe, by "mutual consent" according to the board of directors - but Walker implied he had been sacked.

Norwich, who are 16th in the table, ended their relegation fears by recording 5-0 victories in their last two home games, but before that they had gone 14 games without a win.

Walker, who returned to Carrow Road in June 1996 following his first successful spell at the club, still stood by his record. "I am bitterly disappointed, to say the least," he said. "They have decided to make a decision which is their prerogative and, at the end of the day, that's the way it is. I think I have worked hard under trying circumstances this year, but the decision has been made. Whoever comes in is going to be a reasonably lucky man."

The Canaries' vice-chairman, Roger Munby, claimed

Walker had gone now to give the club plenty of time to find a replacement who could take them back to the Premiership.

"We chose this timing, the earliest possible time, to give ourselves the best possible chance of setting out with the right recruitment policy," he said. "We want to deliver the right manager able to deliver our number one objective - the Premiership."

The assistant manager, John Faulkner, will take charge of team affairs for their final game against Reading on Sunday.

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